THIS SOVIET WORLD

BY

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ON INTERPRETING A WORLD

A leading Russian Communist said to me a year ago: "The mind of our people is changing so fast under the conditions of socialism that it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to speak to the rest of the world. We find it harder to understand them, and they us."

We who go back and forth between the Soviet world and the world of capitalism—not only in space from New York to Moscow but also in spirit from intimate life with Soviet people to intimate life in America—feel keenly this difficulty. Important words like freedom, democracy, dictatorship have different meanings on different sides of the border. The Soviet world is sharply conscious of planning its future; the capitalist world is always arriving where it hadn't intended. And Soviet officials are not always helpful in making their acts intelligible; they often assume that only deliberate malice can doubt them and that the only needed explanation is the appropriate citation from Marx.

To explain the swiftly growing Soviet world to that other world out of which it was born is a task that becomes steadily more complex. For if its outer achievements are every year more able to

speak for themselves, its inner life more and more diverges from that of capitalism in a hundred subtle ways.

In the Berlin station a giant sign greets me with three-foot letters: "Think of your hair!" My mind flashes back to the world I have left. What are Soviet people thinking of? The Stakhanov drive, the Moscow city plan, Marie and her sugar beets, the conquest of the north. And hair and perfume, O yes, of course. Everyone knows of the rising standard of living and firmly believes in a cultural life—more bath-tubs, radios, books and dramatic clubs and doubtless more hair. But their individuality is expressed not by possessions and polish but by the various ways in which men create. Dynamic is the word; their civilization is dynamic.

The regimentation of life by property is my next shock in the capitalist world. The obscene phrases "damages for alienation of affections" or "a $50,-ooo man" or the remark: "I do it only for the money that is in it"—what degradation they imply of human life and work! I see able engineers spending creative power on little models in a government relief job just to keep alive. I see a journal of high standard, the life-work of an able editor, submerged by a new owner's wish for quick profit. Lives are conditioned in the Soviet world also, by

trends and stages of organization, but not by the profits of a boss.

The difference appears in the use of pronouns. People under capitalism are contrasting "I" and "they." "Too bad it couldn't have been on my land," a man remarks of a California oil-strike. Soviet folk would be hailing "our new oil-wells"; to them the idea of a private oil-well is already as quaint as a private postal system. I note a remark about American unemployment: "If it gets any worse, they'll have to do something." Who is this ultimate, uncontrollable "they"? The term betrays the class society of which the speakers are unconscious; they are waiting for some boss to act. I hear a debate: "Is America going fascist?" and think how much less passively Soviet folk would word it. "Shall we go fascist? No. Then exactly how shall we prevent it?" Soviet folk say "we" of one-sixth of the earth's surface. Uzbek cotton-pickers, toiling under the sun of Central Asia, say: "We are conquering the Arctic; we rescued the Chelyuskinites." Ukrainian farmers who never went up in an airplane talk of "our stratosphere records" and "the loss of our Maxim Gorky airplane" as they take up collections to build ten new ones. But even Mrs. Roosevelt asks me: "Are Russian peasants getting more reconciled to accepting direction?" I feel the hopelessness of language

as I answer: "No, they are learning better to organize and direct themselves."

Americans often ask me whether Russians are not naturally more altruistic than Americans, more fit for communism, they imply. No, it is something quite different. Russians at the time of the Revolution were more medieval than Americans, which means "naturally" more petty, unreliable, inefficient, given to bargaining and cheating. Traits of the Asiatic market-place were widespread and occasionally still annoy the visitor. But these traits are disappearing under the fact of joint ownership, which brings identity of individual with community good.

Joint possession of the country's resources and productive mechanism is the economic reality which unifies Soviet life and makes it dynamic. It is this that washes out the antagonism between personal and public good, that makes men say "we." It is this that makes men conscious planners of their future; for owners plan but non-owners can only fight or drift. The chief quality of Soviet civilization is the sense that the world is "ours," to seize, understand and make over.

This Soviet world is my theme; I give scant space to those fast disintegrating forces that fought it. I tell not the "whole truth," for truth is never "whole"; there are always at least two truths in

conflict: the truth that is dying and the truth that is coming into existence. American Tories who intrigued for King George had their truth also, but it remains only as piquant sauce to romance; the truth of the Continental armies remained to build the modern republic. They themselves recalled the frozen feet of Valley Forge less as suffering than as heroism; their raids on hungry farms passed into memory not as banditry but as necessity and daring. History's greatest gift to victors is that not only they, but their truth survives.

Yet I do no injustice to those many lives which in greater or less degree were wrenched or broken by the coming of the new Soviet order. Even for them the new years obliterate the past. They also change to seek their new future in the new system; lives broken in terms of property are being remade in terms of work. Saboteurs reform and win posts of honor; kulaks come back from exile to factories and farms; children have an equal start now regardless of fathers. For this war differs from other battles in that all men, even the conquered foes, are absorbed into the ranks of the conquerors—joint heirs to all the fruits of victory.

A. L. S.

PART I

MEN MAKE THE SOVIET WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE PLAN FOR REMAKING THE WORLD

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world; our business is to change it."

KARL MARX, *Theses on Feuerbach.*

Whenever I ask myself what brings increasing visitors to Moscow, what they want here and what they find, and why the eyes of the world turn more and more to the Soviet Union with a questing hope that hardly yet dares call itself belief, there flashes into my mind the remark made to me in 1930 at Dnieprostroy by the young and disillusioned son of a Wall Street millionaire.

Dnieprostroy in those days was the first of the famous giants of the new Soviet Russia, "the largest power dam in the world."[1] Hour after hour we climbed the cliffs and ravines of its mighty construction. We fled from screaming sirens that warned of blasting rock. We saw great stone-crushing plants, saw-mills, locomotive repair shops, temporary power station—all sizable works harnessed to the task of making a greater power station which should in turn serve plants a hundred

[1] Since then surpassed by the Boulder Dam.

times their scope. We visited the "socialist city" where discussion raged between advocates of individual cottages or big apartment houses for the future town. We saw hurriedly constructed club houses where thousands of workers busily grabbed knowledge—reading, writing, political economy and the technique of their new job.

Night fell. We stood on the shore of the yet unharnessed river, destined to rise to bury those high banks beneath a man-impounded lake. We gazed far down at the great sweep of electric brilliance that had already shattered the age-old darkness of the Ukrainian steppe. It was then that my companion said: "I think that Dnieprostroy has answered the question that brought me to Russia."

"What question?" I asked.

"Whether the world is to be changed by trying one at a time to improve human beings or by changing the social environment that makes human beings."

In the pause that followed the sounds of construction came to us incessantly, rising from the bowels of earth and filling the horizon. The short, sharp puffs of engines, the roar of cliffs torn asunder, the ceaseless beat of mills grinding stones into concrete, the rasp of drills eating downward into river granite. Sharpened by night and softened by distance, they blended into a mighty sym-

phony—the music of man, the builder, subduing the earth.

Dark beyond the circling lights lay Hortitz Island, in ancient days the last stand of free-booting bandit chieftains against oppressors. We remembered the husky peasant girl from the island whom we had seen in overalls that morning, gang-boss over twelve men who excavated rock by explosions of liquid air. Dnieprostroy had changed her in a few months from a farm servant to a "brigadier." We remembered the blacksmith whom we had asked in the glare of foundry fires how he liked his work and who burst forth with fiery will: "You know, we're going to finish her in 1932"—a simple workman pushing ahead by one year the estimate of Hugh L. Cooper's world-experienced engineers.[2]

We recalled how competitions between workers of right and left bank drove the dam ahead, doubling the concrete-laying estimates of the Americans by force of newly awakened will. Signals night by night across the raging torrent told in red and green lights the day's total, celebrated over-fulfillment of plan by a great red star. Night by night, week by week each bank fought to keep its red star shining. We remembered motion pictures,

[2] The workman's estimate won out. The dam was finished in 1932, a year ahead of schedule.

dramas, concerts, lectures which brought the city's culture to these thousands who had come from the scattered farms of the Ukraine. The fine new polytechnic institute where workers chosen from the river-gangs were being turned in forty classrooms into engineers. We saw on the high bank the homes of the American consultants, who understood better than the Russians the technique of the great job but were eternally puzzled by its spirit.

Yes, Dnieprostroy gave the answer to my companion's question. Dnieprostroy was a new form of production under a new social system. It was remaking individuals by wholesale.

Increasingly in the past five years Americans have come to the Soviet Union, scientists, engineers, artists, economists all bent on their own pursuits, dogmatic or bewildered tourists, seeking proof of an old belief or material for a new one. Especially since the crash of 1929 smashed the world which was "inevitably getting better," they have come, fleeing from the ruins of that earthquake to learn what, if anything, the Soviet Union offers. By no means all of them put their question as clearly as did my young companion; by no means all interpret so swiftly the essence of the first construction job they see. But the question he

asked is basically what brings most of them, an ancient quest of man which has troubled philosophers no less than baffled tourists: "Can our world be remade? And how to remake it?"

The problem is especially pressing upon the American middle class of today, which has seen its old world taken from it in ways that it hardly understands. The independent small property owners, mostly farmers, who formed a hundred years ago 80 per cent of the American people except in the slave South, bequeathed to their descendants ideals of democracy and freedom, the "liberty and equality of men owning their own means of livelihood." [3] But large scale industry, developing through a century, wiped out the small enterprisers, increased the number of salaried employees and made the farmer dependent on banks and markets, thus changing America to a "nation of hired workers." Only 12 per cent of the people live by ownership of their own property, in place of 80 per cent a century ago.

The myth of property remained long after the reality had vanished. Millions of these salaried people still felt that they owned something—no longer a store, a small workshop, an unencumbered farm, but savings in stocks, bonds, insurance—

[3] See Lewis Corey: "Crisis of the Middle Class." *The Nation*, Aug. 14, 1935.

which lifted them somewhat above the ranks of laboring hands. Crashingly the world economic crisis destroyed this illusion. As if to emphasize how little control these small people had over their own property, the value of their liquid wealth shrank from twenty-seven billion dollars in 1929 to four billion in 1932.[4] Millions of the middle class were thrown into the same abyss of ruin with millions of wage-workers; they wait together on bread-lines, study together the government relief programs, hunt together for a boss. For all of them alike, as long as the capitalist world remains, must put their trust in bosses, someone who owns and will give them access to the means of production and of life.

Their situation is the more distressing because for most of our Western world the past hundred years has been what John Strachey aptly calls the "century of the great hope." [5] Millions of men became better fed, better housed, better clothed through the industrial revolution which took production out of the home workshop into the factory and knit together the ends of earth by the railroad, steamship, telegraph. Especially in America—where the arrival of the new machines

[4] Figures from Robert R. Doane on liquid wealth of persons with incomes under $5,000. Quoted by Corey.

[5] John Strachey, *The Menace of Fascism.*

and technical methods coincided with a continent-wide expansion into lands of vast wealth, developed by energetic toilers from all nations for the first time unhampered by any remnants of feudalism—the belief in inevitable progress and increasing prosperity was both a conscious and unconscious national faith. The little red schoolhouse bade every boy aspire to be president. "Go west, young man." . . . "Don't be a bear on America," said successful plutocrats. But far deeper than these conscious preachings spread the atmosphere of determined optimism which made every man who was not a good booster seem subtly immoral to his friends. Did not the great lands of America, the efficient industries of America, the productive energy of America, offer the basis for a good standard of life for everyone—an "American standard"? It was easy to prove that they did—and do!

What happened to that faith in inevitable progress? If it still survives in some circles as a despairing habit, elsewhere it has been replaced by belief in inevitable doom. "Inevitable drift to fascism," "inevitable twilight of the West," "the old standard of prosperity can never return," are phrases common on lips that not long since hailed inevitable advance. Others begin a frenzied search into the faiths of past ages, to know if elsewhere

than with us abides the truth. These learn that belief in the inevitability of progress has never been a universal faith. It has been confined to definite periods of economic advancement, and to certain nations within those periods or certain classes within nations. Did not whole centuries of the Middle Ages view the world as an essentially unchanging garden of human souls from which religion culled a few for heaven, leaving the rest for hell? Even today do not hundreds of millions of people—those great suppressed races of the East—find life's processes so fundamentally evil that their essential faith is Buddhism in which Nothingness is bliss?

Even in our West, as capitalism decays into fascism, there arise new denials of the inevitability of progress. Ideals of the past—the Roman Empire, the Germanic gods, the feudal Britain featured by fascist-striving novels—gild with emotional glamor the tenets of fascism: that science and machine production are evil, that democracy, peace and the conquest of poverty are futile dreams of a decadent society, that murderous war is man's noblest end. For fascism is the last stand of a desperate capitalism which can no longer use the fruits of science and machine production, which dare no longer permit either peace or democracy, since it must brutally refuse to its victims that

abolition of poverty which is already technically possible in the world.

Can human reason find a way to reorganize human society—a way which human wills can follow? Must we go backing blindly into the future, cheered now by faith in inevitable progress, damned now by faith in inevitable doom, and claiming from some supernatural world a just and rational balancing of the unjust, irrational chaos found in this? Or can that continuous, collective application of human thought known as science, which we have learned to take as our best, though still unperfected guide in rationalizing and controlling subhuman phenomena, be expanded to rationalize and control our human destiny? Can man master the machines he has made which today threaten increasingly to enslave him? Can he subdue to his will those tremendously productive forces which his science and technical knowledge have released, and which seem adequate to abolish poverty, yet which at present give increasing unemployment, economic crises, wars?

We are asking, in other words, can men master destiny? Are all those gleams of human reason which have given us increasing dominion over material phenomena but will-o'-the-wisps, luring to a swamp which will engulf us the more blackly for

the false, brief light they gave? Or are they gleams of dawn that may brighten into an ever-increasing daylight, in which not only a few isolated phenomena but the whole of man's own nature and his organized society can be planned by human reason and carried through by human wills?

No less than this is the search that brings men over the seas to the Soviet Union. For if to millions in our Western world the century now passing was the century of the great hope, there are other millions in two great half-continents uniting Europe and Asia, who look upon it rather as the century of the great plan. The reference is not to that Five-Year Plan which the Soviet Union made famous, but to a plan far more comprehensive which prepares and includes all five-year plans in all lands and all the future. A plan for remaking the world drawn up eighty-eight years ago on instructions from a London congress of workingmen of many nations, and issued in 1848 under the title *Communist Manifesto*, the work of the German economists Frederick Engels and Karl Marx.

The *Communist Manifesto* is usually thought of as the defiance flung at the world by an illegal revolutionary party of hunted people. So it was. But it was also man's first attempt to apply science to the analysis of human society in order to draw up a plan for remaking the world. Previous attempts

to analyze the world were exercises of philosophers, not directed towards change. Previous attempts to change the world were confined to threats or exhortations to secure specific conversions or reforms. Many Utopian pictures had existed of how beautiful society might be when once made over. But the *Communist Manifesto* tried to answer the question: How can the thing be done? Born in the middle years of that century in which the scientific method was consciously remaking the material world, it sought to analyze the elements of human society, the nature and cause of the changes we see in history, for the purpose of producing social change in a desired direction. That is why it claims to be Scientific Socialism.

The followers of Marx see in him the genius who combined the three chief currents of thought of the nineteenth century—classical German philosophy, classical English political economy and French revolutionary doctrines. The philosophic basis of Marxism is "dialectics," which views every reality, whether of nature, the mind, or society, as in process of continual change through the development and clash of "inner contradictions." This theory applied to the study of history shows how economic, political and social systems are constantly changing, at times slowly, at times by leaps,

catastrophes, revolutions. American capitalism of the Civil War period is not the capitalism of today. The democracy of the New England town-meeting is not the democracy of the modern imperial nation. They may be called by the same name, but names deceive; the thing changes even while you look at it to disdain or admire. Even your disdain and admiration changes, the meaning of your words and concepts. What was true, right, desirable yesterday may not be true, right, desirable tomorrow. Systems have their day and cease to be.

Is there any law in this change? Is there in this constant interaction and conflict of systems and ideas anything basic, changing which will change the rest? "The economic structure," says Marx, is "the real foundation. . . . The mode of production . . . determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life." [6] For Marx the fundamental thing about any human society is not its system of ideas or religions, nor the form of government nor the nature of its family life. These things are important but derivative. They are determined by the ways in which human beings get food, clothing, shelter, by the stage of their advance and the tools they use in these fundamental operations. In a world whose

[6] Preface to a *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.*

economic structure fails to reward honesty and altruism, a Marxist would not spend his efforts preaching these virtues, but in creating an economic system where honesty really prospered, where each man's success must be built on the success, rather than the ruin, of others. The new economic system would make new people; under it, education in the new ideals would be swift and hopeful.

How then do economic systems change? Marx finds the key in his theory of "class struggle." Man's science and invention create new ways of production, and these in turn create new "classes" of human beings, i.e., groups of people who have different and conflicting relations to production. Between these classes a struggle goes on around the ownership of the process of production, which is the means of life. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes." [1]

[1] *Communist Manifesto*, 10-11.

Thus at different stages of human history new classes arise from new ways of working and the struggle between them produces social change. Modern capitalism has not done away with class antagonisms, but it has this distinctive feature—it has simplified them. "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into . . . two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat," [8] those who live by owning and those who can live only by selling their labor power, by seeking a boss.

Between these two remain for a time the middle classes, distraught survivors of those small property owners and independent craftsmen who once embodied the demand for private property against a feudal past. They suffer deeply under advancing capitalism which dislodges them steadily and painfully into the ranks of hired hands. They struggle against their fate, but their strivings are confused, for their instinctive desire is to go back to small scale property. Their cry is to "share the wealth," to start over again that old society of small owners which led to the present-day monopolies and which would lead to them again if it could be revived. The right to private property was once a revolutionary pledge of freedom, but this also has changed with the passing of history. Private prop-

[8] *Communist Manifesto*, 11.

erty in farm plots and hand tools freed serfs from feudal masters; private property in steel mills creates a new slavery. Even small ownership today, wherever it survives or comes into being, is at the mercy of large scale finance.

Who owns the world? That is the basic question conditioning all hopes of social change. What is wrong with the world today, according to Marxists, is private ownership of the great productive processes which are socially operated. The way out is not backward to subsistence farms and handicraft; it is forward to social ownership. Not "share the wealth," but jointly owned wealth, jointly organized by and for all who work. Only thus can the great machines be subjugated; only thus can science and modern technique produce plenty for all mankind. Only thus can the present division of men into owners and workers be abolished, a division which is wrecking the world by social strife and international war. It must be superseded by one united class of people—joint worker-owners of the world. From this economic equality, all other forms of equality will grow. First a stage of socialism where men have equal access to labor and receive according to their work. Then when the habits of human beings have been changed by joint ownership, will come the stage of communism in which men freely co-operate in

work according to their abilities and receive according to their needs.

Who will bring about this change of ownership? Clearly not the present private owners: their interests lie the other way. Nor can the disintegrating middle classes achieve it, except insofar as they come to understand that their future lies with the workers. Only one class of people can develop the will to carry through this difficult long epoch of change—the working class which is bound to the mighty mechanism of modern production, mastering it yet enslaved by it. Joint ownership is their only path to freedom; when they understand this, they will accomplish it. They are thus the "really revolutionary class," in whom social ownership of modern production is a living need and can become a flaming passion carrying humanity forward to a higher stage.

The task of every Marxist is to help them understand, to make them "class-conscious," aware of their power and function as creators of social progress. Millions of Americans resent the very idea of classes, and are indignant at "inflaming class-consciousness" where it does not yet exist. But Marxian classes are not epithets inciting to riot; they are categories in a scientific analysis. Marxists say that unless human society is to go down in a catastrophe of slavery, war and ruin, men must

own their tools and the wealth which these create; that tools and wealth have grown too complexly social to be owned individually and must therefore be socially owned; and that only the working class can develop the fighting will to seize the power of ownership and through it remake society. The less the workers are organized, the less conscious they are of their power and function, the more will the coming changes in human society be protracted, painful and blind. The more conscious the workers are of their great task in history, the better they are organized, the more they are able to rally around them the middle classes, the swifter will be the change and the less will be the human suffering.

Two generations of economists in many countries developed the Marxian theory. Lenin built on it the Bolshevik Party which in 1917 carried through the Russian Revolution. Stalin is honored today by Bolsheviks not only as statesman and organizer, but as the far-seeing analyst and guider of social change, who continues and develops the scientific method of Marx, Engels, Lenin. One-sixth of the world today is being remade according to the Marxian program—the first consciously devised pattern that men ever applied to society as a whole.

CHAPTER II

THE PARTY OF REVOLUTION

"To distinguish those who worked from those who talked."

LENIN.

Not by accident did the first socialist revolution take place in Russia. The World War imposed great strains on many countries and the chain of world imperialism broke at its weakest link.[1] More than any other land, Russia was tormented by war and ravenous for peace. Tsardom, that hideous hangover from the Middle Ages, had lost all moral authority and was hated by the entire

[1] Hillquit called the Russian revolution an "historical accident," since it occurred in a backward peasant land. Norman Thomas on the contrary holds it occurred just because the Russians were so backward that they would endure a dictatorship such as no other people would stand.

Stalin says: "The objective conditions for the revolution exist throughout the whole system of imperialist world economy, which is an integral unit." Answering the theory that the revolution must come first "where the proletariat forms the majority, where culture is more advanced, where there is more democracy," he says: "No, not necessarily where industry is most developed; it will be broken where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of world imperialism at its weakest link." From Stalin's Lectures to Sverdlov Students.

people. For decades revolution had been brewing in Russia.[2] The World War added the last unbearable pressure and the explosion came.

Not least among the factors which made the revolution possible and helped determine its form was the existence of the Bolshevik Party.[3] This was no spontaneous creation, born at the moment of revolt; for fourteen years it had been consciously welded by painstaking thought and desperate struggle. Its traditions indeed went back much further. The whole last half of the ninteenth century advanced thinkers in Russia, under the oppression of tsardom, had sought eagerly for the effective revolutionary path. Through fifty years of torment, sacrifice, heroism, incredible energy, careful study, they had tested many methods. They had tried to educate and organize the peasantry; they had tried the terrorist assassination of tyrants. They had failed. They had checked their failures by the history of other nations and a section of them had come to Marxism as the correct program for remaking the world.

If Marx furnished the general program, it was Lenin who developed the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution, and built the organization

[2] Marx noted this as far back as 1877 in his Letter to Zorge. See *Letters of Marx and Engels.*

[3] Today called Communist Party (of Bolsheviks).

for the seizure of power. Bolshevism, as a trend of political thought and a political party, exists since 1903, when the Social-Democratic Party of Russia split into groups known as Bolsheviks (majority) and Mensheviks (minority), which correspond to Communists and Social-Democrats today in other countries. The older leaders wanted to "widen" the Party, to take in all "supporters" and give them all a voice in determining the Party's program. Lenin, though recognizing that any social change must rely on wide masses, not only of workers but of many other "allies," insisted that membership in the Party itself "must be given a narrow definition to distinguish those who worked from those who talked." [4]

To organize and train the Party of Revolution became thenceforth the central task and the greatest achievement of that world-renowned leader, Lenin, who gave his whole life to the study and practice of the science of political power. Power was to him no mere personal achievement of office; it was the organized lifting of the human race one stage forward in history. He studied how to ride the turbulent upheaval which the conflicts in modern society would inevitably produce, how to prepare and lead men for the seizure of the state and the creation of a new order, how at last to organize

[4] Lenin's Account of Second Congress, *Selected Works*, II.

them for the conquest of nature and of their own destiny. This was to Lenin the science of power.

Starting with the Marxian thesis that the working class is the group in modern society which can be organized to take power and to build a new order, Lenin created for this class a "vanguard" of leaders. They must be men of intelligence, will, daring; yet they must act in a disciplined manner, reinforcing a common direction. They must make the revolution a life-long profession, steadily studying the economic, political and social forces of the society in which they live. They must apply this knowledge in action. They must take active part not only in elections and political movements, but in strikes, trade union work, demonstrations, distribution of literature and all the other prosaic or dangerous activities through which the working class becomes organized and conscious of its power. They must keep close to the workers, learning from them and assisting them, and win the right to lead by the confidence they inspire.

How are such leaders to be found among the great hordes of the dispossessed and discontented? How, if found, are they to be welded into a disciplined, fighting force? Lenin had no illusions; he knew that the mass of exploited men who are squeezed out by the dislocations of capitalism, and who turn in hope or despair towards communism,

contains many fools, knaves, fanatics and self-pitying failures as well as men of intelligence and will. He foresaw a long period of difficult struggle, in which men fit to lead would be tested by fire, men capable of learning would be trained by experience, and others would weed themselves out by their follies. Lenin himself gave most of his years to the slow work of building up and training a not very large but thoroughly tested Party, which could give leadership when the hour of revolution came. I have met simple workers to whom Lenin devoted hours of individual teaching, and who remember today the exact phrases he used with them forty years ago. The making of real Communists able to lead the masses is a long and costly process.

Nothing could be more absurd than the two contradictory views of Communists promulgated today by their opponents. They are usually pictured as planless inciters to violence and riot, people who have a crazy desire for chaos, in the hope that something vaguely called communism may somehow ensue. A more sophisticated view, to which no less a person than Sinclair Lewis falls victim in *It Can't Happen Here,* portrays them as brainless sheep required to act in blind obedience to the orders of their superiors for the sake of discipline. Neither of these types could possibly

lead a successful strike, much less a revolution. A Communist who increased risks by recklessness would be early eliminated; a man who only took orders would be useless as a leader. Communists must learn the difficult combination of intelligence with daring; they must learn to act together but they must all know why.

"What we build cannot be built by passive people," said one of the secretaries of the Russian Communist Party to me. "We all had strong convictions; we fought for them and went to jail for them," said another veteran Bolshevik. "Then in jail we fought with our imprisoned comrades over details of past policies, studying and learning from past errors. Often we found that the mistake of a few words in our theory had cost us a year in prison." Again and again groups which could not agree split off from the others. Lenin made no effort to detain them; he distinguished sharply between those allies with whom co-operation was possible for a longer or shorter period, and the smaller group which would stick through everything. Thus was built up that Party of men who had placed their lives in each other's hands so often that they could rely on each other with absolute assurance, not through blind submission but through a habit of mutual consultation and swift acceptance of joint decisions.

The most famous picture of the ideal Communist is given by Krupskaia, widow of Lenin, in an article entitled: "What a Communist Should Be Like." "First of all a Communist is a social person, with strongly developed social instincts, who desires that all people should be well and be happy. Second, he must understand what is happening about him in the world—the mechanism of the existing régime, the history of the growth of human society, the history of economic development, of the growth of property, the division of classes, the growth of state forms. He must clearly picture whither society is developing—to a régime where the happiness of some will not be based on the slavery of others and where there will be no compulsion except strongly developed social instincts. And the Communists must clear the road, as you clear a path in the wilderness, to hasten its coming.

"Third, the Communist must know how to organize creatively. If he is a medical worker, for instance, he must know medicine, then the history of medicine in Russia and other lands, then the Communist approach to the problem of medicine, i.e., how to organize wide masses to create from the ranks of the toilers a powerful sanitary organization in the cause of health. He must know not only what Communism is and what is coming, but

what his own job in it may be and his approach to the masses. Fourthly, his personal life must be submitted to and guided by the interests of Communism. No matter how much he regrets giving up the comforts and ties of home, he must if necessary cast all aside and go into danger wherever assigned. . . . Body and soul he must be devoted to the interests of the toiling masses, of Communism."

Men who have risen high in the Communist Party are characterized by these qualities listed by Krupskaia. They are usually reticent about their deepest motives; it is not the thing to gush one's devotion. One learns of their qualities chiefly through others. Krupskaia, speaking to intimate Party friends at the funeral of her husband Lenin, found the completest expression in the words: "Lenin deeply loved the people." Radek tells how Stalin, answering greetings sent him by the Party on his fiftieth birthday, "said something which, in the mouth of such a reserved man, sounded as though it came from the very depths of his being. Stalin said that he was ready to shed his blood 'drop by drop' for the proletariat." [5]

Men who would lead the masses in changing the world by the Marxian method must obviously strive for constant growth in two directions: in

[5] Radek, *Problems of Soviet Literature*, 144.

ever-deepening understanding of social and economic forces and in ever-widening participation in workers' struggles. Perhaps the first thing that strikes an outsider is the amount of time which all Communists devote to the study of Marxian theory. Managers of great steel plants and busy county officials under the pressure of harvest will find time, at unearthly hours like eleven at night or seven in the morning, for their study of Marxism or their class in current events, deeming these things as essential as their other pressing work.

Visitors to the Soviet Union are not infrequently amazed to find that a Party secretary in a rural township can discuss international affairs with an assurance and abundance of detail which few foreign editors of an American metropolitan newspaper can show, and will handle statistics and history with a good deal more ease than the "Brain Trust." A prominent American politician once expressed to me doubts of the accuracy of the published interview of H. G. Wells with Stalin. Stalin's references to the Cromwellian revolution seemed to him too detailed to have been available for conversation. "People," he said, "don't talk that way." But any Communist in the Soviet Union who did not know the essentials of the Cromwellian revolution, and of other historic revolutions from which he is expected to learn, would

join a class to "raise his ideological level." A Communist who allowed himself to become as ignorant of world affairs as is the average American politician would be ruthlessly "cleaned out" of the Party, or told to join the group of "sympathizers" to learn what he has to know.

The emotional vagueness which is a feature of all capitalist political platforms, and which is indeed desired in order to win wide support without being too definite, is the exact opposite of Communist statement. The Communists even seem to be painfully definite, to "take refuge in formulæ," or to split hairs over the exact interpretation of phrases. All science and technical knowledge, however, advance by just this splitting of hairs to find the exact chemical formula which produces the alloy or the mathematical relation which strengthens the arch of the bridge; discussions in any congress of physiologists or electricians are full of this "dull theory" without which no scientific progress can be attained. Communists take Marxism as such a science; to rise to eminence among them demands years, even decades, of close and penetrating study of social forces. This is no dogma to be learned once for all; it is a developing body of thought, constantly applied to and affected by new conditions. By the very theory of dialectics, these forces are changing. The speeches

of Lenin and Stalin and other Party leaders never deal in stirring oratory or spell-binding generalities but in close and careful analysis. Stalin would no more attempt to sway a Communist congress by "force of personality" expressed in brilliant oratory and colorful phrasing, than Edison would have expected to convince a group of American engineers of the reliability of some new formula by emotional words. One such attempt would ruin either an Edison or a Stalin.

But Communists must not only be scientific; they must also learn to work with the masses. In this they face a special difficulty; the man who has thought for years in Marxian categories may find it as hard to explain them to simple people as an electrical engineer would find it to explain the theory of turbines to men in a candle-lighted world. This is more serious for the Communist than for the engineer; for the latter can build his turbines without help from the candle-lighted individuals, but the Communist cannot make a revolution without the people. Fortunately actions may speak as well as words, and all Communists are required to do active work which brings them in touch with the masses. When intellectuals apply for Party membership, it is a common practice to give them some tasks around a factory, such as teaching night classes in Russian language, civics

or Marxism, or practical assistance in trade union work. After a year or two of such testing, the opinion of the workers is taken as to whether the candidate is fit to be a Party member.

Any Communist Party at any stage in its development in any country considers persons who cannot co-operate with workers' movements as unfit for Party membership. In the Soviet Union where the rank and file of non-Party workers have already considerable knowledge of the Party's ideals, it has become a common thing for them to assist in helping the Party in its selection of members. Two hundred thousand workers who joined the Party some two years ago were actually nominated by the non-Party workers, through repeated meetings and discussions as to what persons in their ranks should be recommended for Party membership. From time to time the Party "cleans out" its membership, and this is always done at open meetings to which all workers of the given institution are invited. Each Communist in the institution must give before this public an extended account of his life and activities, submit to and answer all criticism, and prove before the assembled workers his fitness to remain in the "leading Party." Members may be cleaned out not only as "hostile elements, double-dealers, violators of discipline, degenerates, career-seekers, self-seekers, morally de-

graded persons" but even for being merely "passive," for having failed to keep learning and growing in knowledge and authority among the masses.

People admitted to the Communist Party—this admission demands a period of study and probation—must give considerable time to unpaid "Party work," i.e., the various tasks of strengthening the organization and organizing the masses around it. Having chosen as the chief purpose of their life the achievement of the socialist revolution, they must learn how to build a joint program. They take part in the discussions from which arise the decisions of the Party and they are expected to carry out these decisions energetically but never blindly. For they must know why the decisions are made; they must understand the Party Line and be able to promote it without bothering other people for orders. They must have strong opinions and fight for them; but they must know when to fight and when to yield. If they cannot learn this, they will find themselves outside the Party, thrown out either as "passive" or as "opposition." It is not an easy lesson; there have been many political mortalities.

Party members must learn to decide and act collectively, not only in determining the general line, but also in deciding their own work in it. They must consult and accept their comrades' judg-

ment as to where they themselves can be of most use. In the Civil War Communists were expected to be the first to volunteer for every battle-front. In the Soviet Union today they are first to be sent to difficult posts in industry and farming. They may be torn from jobs in which they are successful and sent to work which they hate; they must thereupon cease to hate it and do it well as an important task. I know of a high official who was taken from a train by a telegram sent through an obscure local secretary in a town through which he passed, and ordered to return for a different assignment. But no order is ever the command of a superior officer; it is the decision of a group of comrades with whom one has chosen to work. This is the famous Party discipline; known as "iron" discipline but also as "conscious" discipline, for it is based not on passive submission but on understanding participation and collective choice. The reward for this discipline is conscious participation in the making of history.

The Communists expect not only to lead the masses, but to learn from them in a constant interaction. They must "organize the proletariat"; they must "guide it in its class struggle." [6] They must "see ahead of the working class," and be the "experienced general staff" which "every army at

[6] Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

war must have if it is to avoid certain defeat."[7] But they do not consider themselves a separate caste of leaders, but a "vanguard" intimately a part of the working class they lead. They modify their program to grant temporarily some "backward" demand of the masses, or to include permanently some new form or method which the masses invent. An example of the first was Lenin's response to the peasants' demands for splitting up the land, a backward step taken to secure peasant support and "in order that they may educate themselves by fulfilling their desires." An example of the second was the adoption of "soviets" in government and "artels" in farming, neither of which forms had been foreseen by the Party until they arose. It is the working class which must dictate and not the Party; in 1925 when Zinoviev argued for dictatorship by the Party, Stalin fought against this "narrow point of view," saying that the confidence between the masses of the people and the Party must not be destroyed by any peculiar Party rights, "because in the first place, the Party might be mistaken, and even if it were not, the masses might take some time to see that it was right."[8]

How can three million Communists lead one

[7] Stalin, *Leninism*, I, 88-89, Cooperative Publishers, Moscow.
[8] Stalin, *Leninism*, I, 51.

hundred and seventy million people? Because they are not alien to those millions, but are the most energetic part of them, whose capacity to lead has been repeatedly tested and recognized by the others. Millions of non-Party people today in the Soviet Union work loyally, even enthusiastically under Party direction, yet do not venture to call themselves Communists. One of my best friends was a woman who gave her life to the care of homeless children, and who said to me once: "My life began with the Soviet Power; it alone gave me the chance to fight for children. . . . I care more for the Party's success than for anything in life." Yet when her fellow-workers voted her "worthy of being a Communist," she declined the honor, knowing she could not honestly join while she disagreed on one or two points in the Party program.

A fifty-two-year-old wheelwright, Rosenberg, whom I met in the Jewish Autonomous Territory of Birobidjan, had courageously dismantled his home in the Ukraine and taken his family of ten to pioneer in the Far East. He had fought through incredible hardships to build a collective industry which made carts; he was now a member of the city government giving much unpaid time to civic work. "When the Party decided to develop Birobidjan," he explained, "I knew it would be a

great future. It goes higher and higher to the building of socialism. I myself can't build it, but if I work and others work, we'll build it." Few could have expressed the Communist goal more sincerely than Rosenberg, yet he did not think of joining the Party. "I don't know enough," he said. "I am just studying the first political courses. Serious reading is not so easy for me. I am fifty-two years old."

In the Far North fourteen years ago I met Rimpalle, who had risked his life to run the Finnish border and "help the Revolution." He organized the first quarries and mines in a hungry Arctic land; he created a trade union, a co-operative and a night-school for illiterate natives of the forests. He made $100,000 for the state that first summer and got for himself—it was the time of War Communism—only "rations of potatoes and good, fat gravy and one resoling of my boots." Rimpalle said to me: "It's a useful job. Up here so near the border and the propaganda of the White Finns, we needed to have an industry to give food to the people." He was already a candidate for the Communist Party, expecting to be admitted to full membership in a few months.

These examples show what is required of Communists. Devoted activity under Communist direction, such as the Jewish wheelwright gave, is

not enough. Ninety per cent allegiance, such as the social worker offered, is not enough. Nor was it enough for Rimpalle to work self-sacrificingly to increase socially owned wealth; he must understand consciously the political purpose of his work. I have in the course of fifteen years in the Soviet Union met an occasional Communist who was a grafter, and many more who were stubborn bureaucrats and unenlightened fanatics. But I have also seen how the Party throws out dead wood—not always accurately—and renews itself from the working class it leads.

Such is the organized Party which carried through the Revolution and which today welds into shape the great masses of the Soviet Union, with its vast distances, its once backward populations, its hundred and eighty-two nationalities, its foes on all borders. It succeeds by choosing its members with discrimination, by keeping them firmly organized, forever studying and continuously on the job.

The Communist Party does not expect to last forever. "When classes disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat dies out, the Party also will die out." [9] It sees its task as belonging to a definite stage in human society, with a beginning, a development and an end. No other political

[9] Stalin, *Leninism*, I, 96.

party in the world has this type of historic consciousness, this supreme confidence; all others live from election to election, and make no long time plans. The Communist Party considers that it has a specific job in history and confidently expects to stay in power for the time required to carry it through.

CHAPTER III

THE DICTATORSHIP

"The conquest by the proletariat of such political power as will enable it to suppress all resistance on the part of the exploiters."

Program of Russian Communist Party.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end in itself. . . . (It) is a means, a path leading to socialism."

STALIN in Address to
Sverdlov Students, June 1925.

Most Americans shrink from the word "dictatorship." "I don't want to be dictated to," they say. Neither, in fact, does anyone. But why do they instinctively take the word in its passive meaning, and see themselves as the recipients of orders? Why do they never think that they might be the dictators? Is that such an impossible idea? Is it because they have been so long hammered by the subtly misleading propaganda about personal dictatorships, or is it because they have been so long accustomed to seek the right to life through a boss who hires them, that the word dictatorship arouses for them the utterly incredible picture of one man giving everybody orders?

No country is ruled by one man. This assumption is a favorite red herring to disguise the real rule. Power resides in ownership of the means of production—by private capitalists in Italy, Germany and also in America, by all workers jointly in the USSR. This is the real difference which today divides the world into two systems, in respect to the ultimate location of power. When a Marxist uses the word "dictatorship," he is not alluding to personal rulers or to methods of voting; he is contrasting rule by property with rule by workers.

The heads of government in America are not the real rulers. I have talked with many of them, from the President down. Some of them would really like to use power for the people. They feel baffled by their inability to do so; they blame other branches of government, legislatures, courts. But they haven't analyzed the real reason. The difficulty is that they haven't power to use. Neither the President nor Congress nor the common people, under any form of organization whatever, can legally dispose of the oil of Rockefeller or the gold in the vaults of Morgan. If they try, they will be checked by other branches of government, which was designed as a system of checks and balances precisely to prevent such "usurpation of power." Private capitalists own

the means of production and thus rule the lives of millions. Government, however chosen, is limited to the function of making regulations which will help capitalism run more easily by adjusting relations between property and protecting it against the "lawless" demands of non-owners. This constitutes what Marxists call the dictatorship of property. "The talk about pure democracy is but a bourgeois screen," says Stalin, "to conceal the fact that equality between exploiters and exploited is impossible. . . . It was invented to hide the sores of capitalism . . . and lend it moral strength." [1]

Power over the means of production—that gives rule. Men who have it are dictators. This is the power the workers of the Soviet Union seized in the October Revolution. They abolished the previously sacred right of men to live by ownership of private property. They substituted the rule: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

What characteristics of the new régime most obviously showed its dictatorial character? They were the following:

First, the Bolsheviks took power without waiting for a majority vote—in the elections to the Constituent Assembly they had just received nine million out of thirty-six million ballots—but relying on their overwhelming majority among the

[1] Stalin, *Leninism*, I, 46.

industrial workers, and an overwhelming superiority in that part of the army near the capital cities. They maintained power by a shrewd analysis of social classes, and by satisfying the demands of the sections of the population whose support they needed.

Second, they organized the new government on the basis of the workers' organizations, thus disfranchising those classes which lived by private ownership, and giving a greater proportionate representation in the higher government bodies to workers than to peasants during the first eighteen years when equal voting by great masses of illiterate small owners would have wrecked policies of social ownership.[2]

Third, they took control of schools, press and all means of expression, and while encouraging the widest latitude of criticism by workers interested in augmenting or improving the public properties, suppressed any expressions which seemed to the government likely to strengthen the rights of

[2] This difference is commonly stated as a five to one proportion, but such was not the case. Industrial districts had in the higher organs one representative for 25,000 *electors,* while rural districts had one for 125,000 *population,* which included children. The proportion is thus nearer two to one, a much less disproportion than exists (in the reverse direction) between rural and city votes for many state legislatures in America. This disproportion in the Soviet Union was abolished when the rural districts reached literacy and large-scale farming. See next chapter.

private property or injure the efficiency of socially owned production. At certain periods when they felt their social ownership of production threatened, whether by sabotage, graft, or the strengthening of private owners, they suppressed these dangers as drastically as they thought necessary by means which varied from economic discrimination to deportation or shooting.

These are real characteristics which constitute dictatorship rather than any personal prestige of Stalin. Great men attain leadership under all forms of government; the technical forms through which Stalin leads are fully as democratic as those by which an American president governs, and infinitely more democratic than the dominance of a Morgan. Nor is the existence of a single Party necessarily a bar to democratic self-expression, which can find its way as well through one party as a dozen, as later chapters will show. But the above characteristics are definite indications of dictatorship, a rule to which not all men have equal access. They are the tactics of all owners in all countries and all periods of history when they feel themselves threatened. They are the tactics to which owners of private property resorted in Italy and Germany when the rising votes of communist and socialist workers threatened their ownership. They are resorted to today in sections of

America where property feels threatened, whether by farmhands in Imperial Valley or sharecroppers in Arkansas and Alabama. They will be resorted to on a wider scale if American capitalism really feels itself slipping. Nothing in Soviet history indicates that the Bolsheviks were any more "dictatorial" or ruthless than owners of property anywhere under similar stresses. Certainly they were far less bloody and oppressive than any of the "dictatorships of the right"—whether in Hungary, Finland, China, Italy or Germany—established in retaliation or prevention by private ownership which really felt itself in danger.

What were the conditions which made the Bolsheviks establish a dictatorship? Why could they not wait until they were voted into power, and then take over one by one, by government decree or by taxation, the large-scale properties which they believed must be socially owned? The history of fascist seizures of power in face of the threat of socialist voting is beginning to give the world the answer to this question. The Bolsheviks knew the answer from their Marxian analysis of history. No owning class ever gave up ownership without struggle. The holding of government office is not itself power.

The power of ownership over the means of life is the day-by-day power which works incessantly,

buying brains, corrupting or confusing governments, persistently re-establishing itself against any "will of the people." Anyone who has experienced in a single American city, as I have in Seattle, the intensity and variety of methods which the capitalists use to fight so mild a thing as public ownership of street-cars, anyone who knows what they did to the war-time government-owned railroads, or today to the Tennessee Valley Corporation, must realize the resources possessed by capitalism against anything so mild as a popular vote. When they can no longer prevent a municipally owned utility, they corrupt it. They make it inefficient through graft or sabotage; they subordinate it to control by private banks. Meantime they continue to play through all the arts of high-paid propaganda on the minds of the electors, who waver and turn to other cures.

"The change from capitalism to communism is a whole epoch of history," said Lenin. "Till it is ended, the exploiters inevitably have the hope of restoration." Even after capitalists are overthrown on a local scale or on the scale of a single country, they remain for some time "stronger than the workers who overthrew them." Their strength lies in their foreign connections with international capital, in the money and movable property which they still possess, in their organiz-

ing and administrative ability, their superior education, their knowledge of all the secrets of administration, their superiority in the art of war. They are furthermore helped by the force of habit and traditional ways of thinking which remain even in the minds of workers and especially in large sections of the middle classes for a considerable period after capitalism is overthrown.[3]

Marxists therefore hold that the working class must maintain a dictatorial power for an "entire epoch of history" both to prevent attempts at restoration of capitalism and to re-educate the entire population in habits suited to socially owned production. "You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international wars," said Marx to the workers, "not only to change external conditions, but in order to change yourselves and to make yourselves fit for the exercise of political power."[4]

The tactics used by the dictatorship in the Soviet Union were conditioned by the economic development of the land and its international relations. In the first years they were affected by foreign intervention and civil war; in later years they con-

[3] Quoted and condensed from Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Chap. 3.

[4] Marx, *Revelations on the Communist Trial in Cologne*, 1851.

formed to and created the rapid economic advance and increasing international prestige of the country. Four chief epochs may be noted: the period of Workers' Control in the first year of the Revolution; War Communism for the two and a half years of intervention; the New Economic Policy from 1921 to 1928; and the final offensive against capitalism ushered in by the first Five-Year Plan.

The new workers' state inherited a country economically broken by the strain of World War. Peasants were seizing lands of landlords; factories had closed and their workers were hungry; banking was demoralized by the rapid fall of the currency; soldiers without food or munitions were fleeing home from the front. "Peace, land and bread," was the cry of the country. The capitalists could not satisfy it and this brought the Bolsheviks to power. They at once gave land to the peasants, repudiated all state debts, nationalized banks and transport and created a state monopoly of foreign trade. Industry was left in private hands, but "workers' control" committees were established from the workers in each industry. These examined all accounts, studied the source of raw materials and fought to keep up production against the attempt of private capitalists to close down the factories as unprofitable. Internal trade remained private; on the second day of the Revo-

lution a proclamation urged traders to continue business as usual. A policy however was announced for the gradual combining of factories into large-scale trusts, which should then be nationalized, and for the gradual socializing of internal trade through co-operatives.

These policies—the normal reaction of a workers' government wishing to rebuild the economic life of a ruined country with as little upheaval and disruption as possible, for the sake not of profit but of human welfare—united around the government the overwhelming majority of the population, including both workers and peasants. Opposition came from landlords, capitalists and the upper strata of engineers, civil servants and professional people; but if these used violence or sabotage against the new policy, they were suppressed by governing organizations composed of great masses of the common people.

A vivid example of dictatorship in this period is given by Lenin, in a contrast drawn between dictatorship by property and dictatorship by workers. "The state has forcibly to evict a family from a house. This is done time and again by the capitalist state and will be done by our proletarian state. . . . The capitalist state evicts the workers' family which has lost its breadwinner and is unable to pay

rent." After describing the enforcement by a squad of police of the rights of property against poor people, Lenin continues with the picture of the dispossession of a rich man by the workers' state.

"Our detachment of workers' militia consists, let us say, of fifteen people—two sailors, two soldiers, two class-conscious workers (of whom only one, let us assume, is a member of our Party or a sympathizer), one intellectual, and eight members of the toiling poor; at least five are necessarily women, domestic servants, unskilled workers, and so on. They come to the rich man's house, inspect it, and find that there are five rooms occupied by two men and two women. 'This winter, citizens, you must confine yourselves to two rooms and place two rooms at the disposal of two families that are now living in cellars. For the time being, until with the help of engineers (you are an engineer, I think?) we build good dwellings for all, you will have to put yourselves to inconvenience. Your telephone will serve ten families. This will save about a hundred hours' work in running to the stores and so forth. The student citizen in our detachment will write out two copies of the text of this state order and you will be kind enough to give us a signed declaration that you

undertake to abide by it faithfully.'"[5] This is a vivid example of a dictatorship over property enforced by great masses of the common people.

Under pressure of foreign intervention and civil war, the limited nationalization of "Workers' Control" merged into the period of "War Communism." Attacking armies separated Soviet Russia for two and a half years from her chief food and fuel bases. The granary of the Ukraine, the cotton of Turkestan, the coal of the Donetz, the oil of Baku, the mines of the Urals were in enemy hands. The dictatorship adopted "War Communism," the tactics of a besieged land. It requisitioned all grain and necessities of life, and rationed them under direct government control; it seized all factories and used the broken machines of one as spares to repair the scarcely less broken machines of another. This policy alienated large sections of the peasantry by crop requisition. It ruined industry more thoroughly than any modern industry has ever been ruined, being an efficient device for using up the last ounce of raw material and the last spare bolt. But the policy of "War Communism" enabled an already exhausted land to carry on for two and a half more years against the attacking armies of the world.

[5] Lenin, *Will the Bolsheviks Retain Power?* published October, 1917.

Soviet power survived. With the coming of peace Lenin at once introduced the New Economic Policy, an attempt to build up the country's economic life as rapidly as possible by a "two-sided process of the development of capitalism and the development of socialism." [6] Grain requisitions were replaced by limited taxes with permission for free trade. Private capitalists were allowed to enter both trade and industry, the state retaining the "commanding heights" of land, finance, heavy industry, transport, and foreign trade. This policy brought the peasant, small enterpriser and professional classes back to loyalty—a wavering loyalty, for if some had been won to socialism, others now hoped to grow personally rich. Capitalist nations abroad echoed the belief that Russia was swinging back to the ancient order. But the Soviet workers, led by the Communists, gave time on holidays to great collective drives for repairing factories, making street-cars and new equipment as donations to their country. During "War Communism" they had worked for rations; now they worked for low but steadily increasing wages, building up out of their own sacrifice the first socialist accumulation which should give them economic power for the final offensive against capitalism. Thus industry which

[6] Stalin, *Leninism*, I, 314.

in 1921 produced one-fifth the pre-war standard was driven by fivefold increase in 1928 to "normalcy."

Russia in 1928 was only half socialist. Most of industry was socially owned but farming was in the hands of peasant proprietors, the stronger of whom were petty capitalists, struggling not only to survive but to grow. Class strife went on between these emerging rural capitalists and the impoverished farmhands. Youth was leaving the farms and flooding the cities with unemployment. Discussion had racked the Communist Party as to whether socialism could be built in a single country, particularly a backward peasant land. Following the analysis of Stalin, the Party decided that it could be done by swiftly creating modern heavy industry and simultaneously industrializing farming. The Soviet Union plunged into that now famous struggle known as the Five-Year Plan, and emerged with large-scale industry and the largest scale farming in the world, both of them socially owned.

It was a bitter fight, carried through against the upper sections of the peasantry and part of the middle class. An epidemic of sabotage broke out in the industries among the higher engineering staff, who had consciously or half-consciously expected to advance towards privilege and wealth.

Men high in the canning industry put broken glass, animal hair and fish tails into food destined for workers. A township veterinary who hated collectivization inoculated six thousand horses with plague. An irrigation engineer tried to discourage the policy of settling yellow-skinned nomads on the soil by using antiquated surveys which he knew would not deliver the water. These cases and thousands more are taken from confessions of men who were later repentant. The dictatorship fought back, shooting the most serious offenders, imprisoning and exiling others. The energy of loyal workers and engineers carried through the Five-Year Plan. Its success won over many earlier saboteurs so that by 1931 Stalin was able to announce that the intellectuals were turning towards the Soviet Government, and should be met by a policy of co-operation.[7]

The most spectacular act of ruthlessness which occurred in those years was the exiling of several hundred thousand kulaks—rural property-owners who lived by trade, money-lending or by exploiting small mills, threshers, and hired labor—from farm homes in European Russia and the Ukraine to Siberia or the northern woods. The usual assumption outside the Soviet Union is that this exiling

[7] Speech delivered at Conference of Leaders of Industry, June 23, 1931.

occurred through arbitrary action by a mystically omnipotent G.P.U. That organization did of course organize the deportation and final place of settlement in labor camps or on new land. But the listing of kulaks who "impede our farming by force and violence" was done by village meetings of poor peasants and farmhands who were feverishly and not too efficiently organizing collectively owned farms with government loans of machinery and credits. The meetings I personally attended were as seriously judicial as a court trial in America. One by one there came before the people the "best families," who had grabbed the best lands, exploited labor by owning the tools of production as best families normally and historically do, and who were fighting the rise of the collective farm—which had the right to take the best lands away from them—by every means up to arson, cattle-killing and murder. Obviously the situation offered chances for wreaking private grudges. Obviously the occasional agitator from the city was unconcerned with kulak "rights." The meeting of farmhands and poor peasants discussed each case in turn, questioned the kulaks, allowed most of them to remain but asked the government to deport some as "trouble-makers."

It was a harsh, bitter and by no means bloodless conflict, but not one peculiar to Russia. I was

reminded of it again in 1933 by the cotton-pickers' strike in San Joaquin Valley of California. California local authorities deported pickets who interfered with the farming of ranchers; Soviet authorities deported kulaks who interfered with the collectively owned farming of the poor. In both cases central governments sent commissions to guard against the worst excesses. But the "property" which could count on government support was in California that of the wealthy rancher; in the USSR it was the collective property of the poor.

Through all these struggles of eighteen years in the Soviet Union the Marxists had guessed right—one class held firm. Steadily the industrial workers supported and fought for their socialist state. Theirs was the dictatorship, the ownership, the rule. Led by Communist analysis, they made alliances with other parts of the population—with the great mass of the people to overthrow big landlords and capitalists and later with the poorer peasants to overthrow the richer. The middle classes changed back and forth in their loyalty; but the workers held through.

Today the chief fight of the dictatorship is against corruption and bureaucracy. The workers, in other words, struggle with their own gov-

ernment, not to overthrow it but to improve it by weeding out inefficiency. A vivid example of this was given by a letter from three railway-workers published in *Pravda*. They told how the workers of their station, hearing that Sizran station was considered a model, chose three delegates to go and study it. "The election fell on us. However, to our great regret, we convinced ourselves that Sizran is no model." The letter proceeds to expose fictitious bookkeeping which compelled engineers to list repeated repairs as new in order to protect the reputation of the repair shops, and other false entries which hid inefficiencies. They noted employees who had been demoted for calling too open attention to troubles. They did a thorough and technically accurate job of debunking Sizran, a station on a different railroad to which they had gone in search of good methods. Imagine workers from a station on the Erie giving this attention to study, analyze and reform a station on the Pennsylvania! Imagine their securing ready access to all the records of an alien line! Imagine this as routine news in a metropolitan daily paper, leading to check-up and reprimands of railway superintendents for inaccuracy in reporting their work!

This is today's routine in the Soviet Union. Scores of letters like this appear daily in the press

throughout the land. Some of them are ironic, some statistical, some outraged. But all of them express men who know themselves owners, and through ownership dictators of the land in which they live.

CHAPTER IV

THE GROWING DEMOCRACY

"Soviet Power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic."

LENIN.

Step by step the Soviet Union fights forward towards that complete democracy which has never yet existed anywhere on earth. For democracy is neither absolute nor static. It varies in type, extent and intensity. It may grow or diminish. In the Soviet Union it grows.

What are the functions of government in the Soviet Union? How wide is the participation of the people? How much of their life can they control? Whence come the ideas that are followed in the land? What initiative and creative energy is expressed? Who rises to high posts and by what means? All these questions must be considered in determining what kind of democracy exists.

Let us take first the formal facts of voting, though this is far from exhausting the Soviet citizen's participation in government. The Soviet Union has today the largest body of voters any-

where in the world. Moreover a larger percentage of them come out to elections than in any other country; they give more time to their elections and decide a greater variety of questions.

All "toilers" over the age of eighteen may elect and be elected; the word is interpreted to include students, housewives, old people who have passed the age of work as well as those more formally known as workers. Voting thus extends to a younger age than is common elsewhere, and there are no disqualifications for transient residents, paupers, migratory workers, soldiers, sailors, such as exist in most countries; even non-citizens may vote if they work in a Soviet industry. There are no restrictions for sex, creed or color, nor even for illiteracy. The only significant restriction relates to "exploiting elements," but the steady decrease of privately owned enterprises has cut the disfranchised to 2.5 per cent of the population in the 1934 elections; by 1937 it is expected that all will have the vote. In the 1934 elections 91,000,000 people were entitled to vote, and of these 77,000,000, or 85 per cent, actually participated, which is double the proportion found in most countries.

Let us take a motion picture of a Soviet election. In December 1934 the Moscow streets were thronged with processions, continuing for several days. Special street-cars, gay with banners, car-

ried people to meetings. Men and women gathered in side streets, formed in line with merry chatter and went with bands and flags to the building secured for their election meeting.

All over the country for more than a month elections had been going on in far-away factories and villages. Soviet elections do not take place on a single day but are determined by local convenience within a period of several weeks prior to the convening of an All-Union Congress. Localities choose dates which will enable their outgoing governments to finish their business, and give the incoming governments time to prepare demands for the All-Union Congress. These candidates and demands had been subjects of much discussion. But the attitude to the elections expressed itself rather in action than in talk. Hundreds of thousands of peasants were joining collective farms "to break with the past and enter the elections as collective farmers." Factory workers were energetically completing new models of locomotives, turbines, inventions, to send as presents to the coming congress. There were, in fact, so many of these presents that the sending of most of them was ordered confined to reports.

In wooded mountains of Siberia the dark-skinned Oirots announced proudly: "We have

abandoned the wandering life of wigwams; we have raised our literacy rate from 6 to 89 per cent; we enter these elections as educated farmers, settled on our own soil." From the Turkoman Republic they were matching this claim with another: "Our once suppressed women have increased the proportion who turn out to elections from 2.5 per cent to 73 per cent in these eight years." The historic city of Kiev was boasting: "Half our elected deputies are women. We lead the Soviet Union in the proportion of women elected to office; this means that we lead the world." But their boast was matched by the textile city Tver, now renamed Kalinin, which had fully as many.

Young Pioneers were reciting poems to urge on their elders:

> That we may build more firmly,
> Advancing more confidently to victory,
> We choose to our Soviets firm, tested fighters,
> Close-welded, the best of our best.

On the southern Kazak steppe an aged yellow-skinned herdsman, dying, sent a last message to his son who had been village president and who was now elected delegate to the All-Union Congress: "All the years of my life were dark with toil and hunger. But I lived to see the new day.

Take care of the Soviet power, my son; it is our power, our happiness."

Along the Arctic coast the autumn herring run began a few days before the date set for local elections. The fishermen went to sea. Some of the election commissioners held elections in the absence of a considerable number of voters and were roundly denounced for it by *Pravda*, central organ of the Communist Party. "A gross violation of Soviet democracy! What right have commissioners to hold elections when workers cannot come? We are glad to note that many of the fishermen had a better sense of their obligations. Many crews held their own meetings and sent deputies ashore with their instructions. But they should not have been forced to this irregularity. The proper course was found by those commissioners who held regular election meetings on the boats and thus combined enthusiastic work for a good herring catch with the collective decision of what to do with it."

All of this, taken together and multiplied by millions, makes plain the essence of the Soviet election. It is an act of joint owners deciding what to do with their production, how to build a good life on the proceeds. The task of officials is not to enforce some precedent but to find ways of adjusting election machinery to voters. "The hot-

test elections we ever had," they bragged of the 1934 elections, proud of the increasing popular participation in government, which is relied on to check bureaucracy and make state enterprises efficient.

The basic unit for government is the working institution, the factory or office; in rural districts it is the village. Deputies are chosen to the local government, the village or city soviet.[1] The basis of representation and size of the local soviet depends on the size of the community: Gulin village, whose election I visited, has one deputy for every forty voters and a village soviet of thirteen members. Moscow city elects one deputy for fifteen hundred voters and has more than two thousand members in its city soviet. These local deputies meet soon after election to form the new government. They divide among themselves the various departments, which range from the five sections of Gulin village—farming, livestock, culture, roads and finance—to twenty-eight sections, each with over forty deputies, through which Moscow city does business. Besides the more commonly known functions, these local governments own and manage local industry, which in a

[1] The word "soviet" means "council." City soviet is city council.

large city like Moscow includes many municipally owned factories, the street-cars, subway, lights, water, and housing. They receive revenue from public properties, but their budgets may also be augmented by taxes and state loans. Some cities actually bring in revenue—it will be remembered that they get all the house rents; others need help from the higher governments.

On these local governments is built up the whole structure of central government.[2] Local soviets elect deputies to a congress of soviets; the township congress elects to the province, and so on up to the All-Union Congress of Soviets, the highest body in the country. Each of these congresses elects its executive committee and the heads of its various departments; for the highest government these are the great Commissariats of heavy and light industry, finance, health, and so forth. Local departments are both horizontally and vertically controlled, by local governments and by the corresponding department in the higher government. Thus a township health department is responsible both to the township executive committee and to the provincial health department. If orders clash, if a local soviet takes the hospital for some other

[2] A new constitution is in preparation which will change many details, but it will hardly change the principle of close connection between local, state and central bodies in one system.

use, its health department appeals to the provincial health department which brings pressure on the local soviet through the provincial government in the interests of public health.

The greater part of this intricate yet unified system of government is carried on by unpaid work. Elected deputies, whether to village or the All-Union Congress, receive no salaries of office. They draw their usual wages from the factory or institution which sends them and in which they keep on working, except insofar as they may be "released from production" for the needs of government; this varies with the importance of the work they do. There is thus no hard and fast line between the citizen and the man in office. Deputies are a link between the collective life of the factory and the larger collective life of the country. Any worker may approach them conveniently any day in their place of work to ask about the fulfillment of instructions given by the voters. They may be recalled by their constituents at any time simply through a factory meeting.

If voters thus constantly call on their deputies, the deputies are equally entitled to call on the voters for help in carrying out the election program they have voted. A deputy is no substitute for the people, no ruler; he is the representative who organizes them in their own tasks of voluntary gov-

ernment work. Millions of citizens take active part in the sections of the government—housing commissions, school commissions, taxing commissions, labor inspection and so on. Those who develop a taste for running public affairs will be chosen at some election for more continuous and responsible work. Those who specialize in some field, such as health, courts, housing, may be sent on pay for some months or years of study and become full-time civil servants in these departments.

The growth of democracy in the Soviet Union thus depends directly on the extent to which citizens can be interested in taking part in operations of government. This interest is in part assured by the fact that government is so clearly the direct organizing of all aspects of the citizen's life. In a million matters the citizens give direct instructions during the election. They order the increase of school-houses or sound films, the improvement in the quality of bread, the increase of retail stores, the transport of goods in big cities by night; they demand the breaking-up of housing trusts into smaller co-operatives, or the introduction of a less specialized education in the schools. All of these were part of some 48,000 instructions issued directly by Moscow voters to their city government, which reported within three months on the fulfill-

ment of many hundred demands and on the disposition made of all. When instructions clash, as when some citizens want an odorous industrial plant removed from their neighborhood while others want it to stay, commissions are formed which try to satisfy not merely the majority, but as nearly as possible everybody, not through a showing of hands in opposition, but through various adjustments to the suggestions made by all. Capitalist ownership of private property limits the citizen's participation in government to an approval or rejection—expressed in conflict—of general policies. Socialist ownership causes government policies to grow directly and naturally from the correlated demands of millions of people, all of whom are interested in improving the country's wealth.

The interest of citizens in government is also consciously promoted by the Communist Party which stirs up wide competitions between factories, villages, cities, as to the extent and energy of their participation. An industrial plant where less than 95 per cent of the workers come to the election hangs its head in shame as an institution lacking in civic consciousness. Candidates never make speeches or election promises; this would be considered highly indelicate. But the voters pride themselves on picking deputies whose previous

work has been notable and who therefore give promise of being widely useful. They select a fellow worker, not an outside politician. Students choose a student, auto-workers choose an auto-worker, the Moscow Grand Opera elects a famous singer. The future task of these deputies is to extend on a wider scale the type of work for which they are already known. The opera singer will organize connections between the Moscow Grand Opera and the villages, sending out artists to help rural singing classes. The printer on the *Peasants' Gazette* who mechanized its mailing list of two million subscribers was elected to the Moscow city soviet with instructions to help mechanize all the newspapers of the city. A textile worker who helps organize a good day nursery in her factory will be elected by her fellow workers to help improve the city's day nurseries, and will choose to work on the health section of the local government.

The operation of Soviet democracy is thus so intimate, continuous and organic that the observer fresh from capitalist politics hardly recognizes it as government. Where is the debate? Who determines general policies? Can the people throw out the upper officials? Can they throw out Stalin? The Communist Party? The Soviet voter, when asked these last questions, replies in

a puzzled way: "Why should we want to?" The questioner thinks he has been evaded. But all elections presuppose an existing economic system, which voting is powerless to change. Voters in America cannot change Rockefeller's method of operating oil companies for private profit. Similarly no Soviet election raises the issue of returning public properties to private hands: this was settled by the Revolution, and forms the foundation beneath the whole government.

Barring that question, there is nothing whatever that Soviet voters cannot change. They actually do change thousands of officials at every election, and as their acquaintance with the wider problems of the country grows, the forms of democracy are being widened to include direct control of the highest officials. Stalin's chief post is not in the government, but as general secretary of the Communist Party, which would certainly remove him if his policy and actions should ever discredit him with the people; at present he is by far the most popular man in the country. To throw out the Communist Party bodily would be to throw out all the leading and organizing elements in all factories, farms, schools and enterprises; it could clearly be done only by upheaval leading to chaos. But the citizens are constantly at work changing the very membership of the Party, any member of which

may be "cleaned out" on protest of his non-Party associates that he is too dictatorial, too rough towards workers, or merely not a fit leader.[3]

Several elections which I attended will show concretely how soviet democracy functions. Four election meetings were held simultaneously in different hamlets of Gulin village, which had no assembly hall big enough for all. One of these meetings threw out the Party candidate, Borisov, because they felt that he neglected their instructions; they elected a non-Party woman who had displayed energy in improving the village and were praised by the election commissioner—himself a Party member—for having discovered good government timber which the Party had neglected. The central meeting in Gulin expected 235 voters; 227 appeared and were duly checked off by name at the door. There ensued personal discussion of every one of nine candidates, of whom seven were chosen. Mihailov "did good work on the roads." The most enthusiasm developed over Menshina, a woman who "does everything assigned her energetically; checks farm property, tests seeds, collects state loans." Dr. Sharkova, head of the Mothers' Consultation, was pushed by the women: "We need a sanitary expert to clean up our village." The incoming soviet was instructed to

[3] This is discussed in Chaps. 1 and 5.

"increase harvest yield within two years to thirty bushels per acre, to organize a stud farm, get electricity and radio for every home, organize adult education courses, football and skiing teams, and satisfy a score of other needs.

In the Moscow Architectural Institute where 1,500 men and women are qualifying to become architects, every class in the school held three sessions on the elections, discussing first the shortcomings of the outgoing government, then instructions to the new government, and lastly candidates. The fourteen hundred instructions sent in by the students included more and better draughting pencils, evening schools in drawing, more money for students' excursions to see new architecture, more exhibitions of foreign architecture, fruit trees to beautify Moscow, artists to be held responsible for designs of state-made textiles, township architects to be appointed to advise the new construction on farms. Similarly the 1,500 voters of the *Peasants' Gazette* turned in 1,500 proposals, which were carefully worked over by committees, published in a special newspaper issued for the voters, and given to their deputy to put through with their help. These included adequate textbooks for all pupils in the schools, an increase in the number of children's theaters, strengthening the fight against hooliganism, closing the sale of

liquor on Suchevski Street opposite school Twenty-two—the latter being the common form of the fight against alcohol.

Instructions thus adopted become the program of incoming governments, which they use as a weapon to get what they require from provincial and central authorities. Some of the demands can be put through by the electors themselves with the help of their deputy; others need central assistance. When the All-Union Congress meets it knows how many villages are demanding airdromes, sound films, textbooks, electrification. These demands, correlated by engineers and economists, form the content for future development of the life of the country in the direction its citizens choose. But the citizens themselves expect to work to accomplish it. If villagers ask for a seven-room school or a landing field for farm airplanes, they expect deputies to investigate possible fields, make recommendations, get the needed machines from some central authority; but they themselves expect to haul the timber or pay the men who haul it with labor days credited against the joint harvest.

Democracy in Soviet life is not confined to government. Trade unions organize many aspects of workers' life; collective farms and co-operatives organize production and distribution for the farmers. Their organization is separate from that of

government; it is also democratically controlled. In the past two years democracy has become more intimate and decentralized in both these directions. The administration of social insurance, which in 1936 will have eight billion rubles for hospitals, day nurseries, diet kitchens, invalid benefits, old-age pensions and the like, was two years ago given over to the trade unions, as was also the inspection of factories and of workers' food stores. Similarly the whole organization of collective farming, including the relation between fields operated jointly and plots individually worked by farm members, is today in the hands of the farmers themselves, decided by the general meeting at which not less than two-thirds are present. Thus democracy grows more flexible, the intermediate apparatus is lessened, and the various functions of government are handled by those whom they most directly concern.

The extension of social ownership into the farms and the growth in the intelligence of the entire electorate has made possible a third extension of democracy. A new constitution is being drafted by the collective labor of thousands of people in all parts of the land. Economists and historians are studying the constitutions of all countries and considering every detail of democratic technique; their reports will be further discussed in every

factory and farm of the country before the constitution takes final form. It is known, however, that it will include direct election, secret ballot, and equal representation for all citizens, replacing the inequality which hitherto obtained between city workers and peasants. It is also expected to abolish all disfranchised classes, since by 1937 social ownership will be universal and all citizens will belong to one toiling-owning class.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," was said once of the democracy of capitalist society whereby small private owners protected their rights. But socialism demands more than vigilance. Eternally co-operating human energy is the price of socialism and of that complete democracy which operates jointly owned means of production for the expanding life of all. This is the final stage towards which the present Soviet democracy struggles and grows.

CHAPTER V

THE UNION OF NATIONS

"No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations."

LENIN.

"Soviet power is to toiling Kazaks like rain in the desert."

Letter of Kazak peasant to *Peasants' Gazette.*

When the All-Union Congress of Soviets meets in Moscow, it presents a vivid and colorful assembly. Flat-faced Tartars from old Kazan, yellow-skinned Uzbeks and Tajiks from the hills and irrigated valleys in the heart of Asia, slant-eyed Tunguz from the Far Northeast over against Alaska, mix with many score nationalities from the Caucasus to pass the laws which shall govern all these peoples. Many of them are dark-skinned peoples, formerly exploited by the Russians, but equal citizens now under the Soviets. It is as if Congress in Washington contained a score of southern Negroes, half a dozen Mexican farmers from Arizona and California, scattered representatives of the surviving tribes of Indians, an Eskimo, a Hawaiian, an Indian from Porto Rico, a mixed-blood from Panama, all legislating on equal

terms with auto-workers from Detroit, steel-workers and miners from the Pittsburgh valley, and American farmers from the great west. A British governing assembly similarly formed would show an overwhelming majority from the dark-skinned peoples of Africa and India.

Tsarist Russia was known as the "prison of nations." No imperialist power has a history of more brutal racial and national oppression. Nation after nation of the proud mountaineers in the Caucasus was literally driven into the Black Sea by the conquering Russians. The Tartars of Crimea perished by tens of thousands in their flight across the Black Sea to Turkey. The tribes of the great plains and the primitive peoples of the Arctic were debauched in the time-honored imperialist way by the vodka of their conqueror and subdued in soul by the emissaries of his religion, that they might be more easily robbed of lands and furs. Even more bitter, perhaps, than the robbery was the insulting "superiority" of the conquerors. "They cheated us and afterwards despised us," said a flashing-eyed woman Tunguz from the Arctic. "Eh, but it was bad in the old days; all my life I hated Russians."

The country which fell to the Soviet power to organize was seething with national hates, incited and nurtured by the oppression of centuries. Tsarist imperialism, like all imperialisms, not only

oppressed directly, but also set one nation against another. Turks massacred Armenians, Armenians massacred Turks; Ukrainian peasants, stirred up by Russian gendarmes, murdered Jews. The Soviet Government faced in all its intensity that "national problem" which made Austria and the Balkans for generations the tinder box of Europe and has added bitterness to the great conflicts of the modern world.

The Communist policy on nationality was developed over a period of decades by applying the Marxian analysis to the history of nations. Stalin, a Georgian, member of a proud nation which had for centuries been decimated by the wars of its greater neighbors in that hotbed of national hates, the Caucasus, was one of the ablest theoreticians. We find him in the years before the World War developing the exact definition of "nation" as a "historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture," [1] and defending this conception against those who viewed a nation as a matter of "race," the precursors of today's fascists. Capitalism both combines nations and drives them asunder. It knits together the peoples of earth by the railroad, the steamboat, the rapid mail, the newspaper. It creates the ma-

[1] *Marxism and the National Question*, 1913.

terial basis for the brotherhood of all nations but the methods of its expansion brutally thwart that hope. It advances into the backward lands of earth by plunder and annexation. The "civilized" people rob the "uncivilized" ones and finally war among themselves for the right to rob. Imperialism steadily increases both the economic unity of the earth, and the national hates which tear that unity asunder.

The national policy adopted on the basis of this analysis by the Social-Democratic Party of Russia in the years before the war repudiated every form of compulsion of nationalities, recognized the right of each people to determine its destiny, and stated that a durable union of peoples could be accomplished only by voluntary consent and was possible only through the overthrow of capitalism. The first practical test of this principle came in May of 1917, when the Kerensky government of Russia refused the demand of Finland to secede. Lenin declared at the conference of the Social-Democratic Party on May 12: "We say to the Russian people: don't dare rape Finland; no nation can be free that oppresses other nations." Stalin expressed the belief that "now after the overthrow of tsardom nine-tenths of the peoples will not desire secession," but that those who did wish to, must of course be allowed to secede, while a system of

regional economy should be set up for the peoples which decided to remain.

When the October Revolution brought the Bolsheviks into power, they at once renounced all rights to Finland, evacuated the Russian troops from northern Persia and canceled the claims of the Russian imperialists in Mongolia and China. The breaking up of tsarist Russia gave an opportunity to the imperialist powers of the world to fish in troubled waters. England, France, and Germany backed the aspirations of various border nationalities with funds. Yet it was the Bolsheviks and not those imperialist backers who first recognized Latvia, Esthonia, Lithuania as separate states. The Soviets, however, did not only recognize nations; they recognized the right of workers and peasants to revolt. The Ukrainian workers and peasants overthrew the Ukrainian bourgeois Rada; the poor peasants of Turkestan threw out their so-called autonomous government; the "national councils" of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were supported by foreign money but not by their own masses. Peasants' and workers' uprisings in these countries were assisted by the Bolsheviks as part of the October Revolution. The newly rising governments of workers and peasants were given military and economic aid and drawn into a socialist "federation."

This federation at first was loosely organized. Regional autonomy expressed itself in a variety of flexible forms. Some of these local governments retained their own foreign offices; others issued their own money. Each nationality received the amount of freedom which its workers and peasants demanded. The Communists relied on the pressure of mutual economic interests to bring and hold these peoples together, once capitalist exploitation, the source of their bitterness, was removed. Meantime, they paved the way by abolishing all the special privileges of the "colonizers," i.e., those Russian and Cossack groups which had received special lands and privileges from the tsar in return for their services in suppressing their neighbors. The Communists also pushed the policy of recruiting local governments from local people; established schools, courts, administrations, in the native languages; and rapidly trained from formerly illiterate and suppressed natives the future teachers and leaders of their people.

The fruits of this policy were seen on December 30, 1922, when, on the initiative of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, later joined by the Ukraine and White Russia, the amalgamation of all the Soviet republics into a union took place at the very time when the states of post-war Europe were increasingly dividing into hostile camps. Thus was

formed the Soviet Union, a union of nations. The name "Russian" was dropped from the official title of the country which is known as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, of which the Russian republic is only one.[2] Nearly half of its 170 million people belong to nationalities other than Russian. The number of these nationalities is variously given; the census of December, 1926, showed 182 different nationalities with 149 languages. They are people of different races and colors. They range from the reindeer-keeping Eskimo of the north, to the Kazak sheep herder of southern deserts, from the flax growers of White Russian swamps through the many-nationed Volga wheat lands to the cotton producers of Central Asia.

The classic statement of the contrast between the national policy of capitalism and that of socialism was given in the preamble to the Constitution of the new union: "There in the camp of capitalism we have national animosity and inequality, colonial slavery and chauvinism, national oppression and pogroms, imperialist brutalities and wars.

[2] There are seven constituent republics, the Russian, the Ukrainian, the White Russian, the Transcaucasian, the Uzbek, the Turkoman, the Tajik. Many of these, and especially the Russian, which is by far the largest, contain smaller autonomous republics within them. The number of nations represented by delegates in the All-Union Council of Nationalities is forty-two.

"Here, in the camp of socialism, we have mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples.

"The attempts made by the capitalist world during the course of decades to solve the problem of nationalities by combining the free development of peoples with the system of exploitation of man by man have proved fruitless. . . . The bourgeoisie has proved itself utterly incapable of bringing about the collaboration of peoples.

"Only in the camp of the Soviets . . . has it proved possible to abolish national oppression root and branch, to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence, and to lay the foundations for the fraternal collaboration of peoples."

The preamble mentioned, as reasons for a closer union, the economic needs of the war-ruined land, the need of a joint foreign and military policy in the midst of encircling foes, and said that "the very structure of Soviet government, which is international in its class character, impels the toiling masses of the Soviet republics to unite into one socialist family." It concluded with a guarantee of equal status for all people, the right of secession for each republic and the right of admission for "all Socialist Soviet Republics, whether now existing or hereafter to arise."

The Bolsheviks did not rest content with the formal act of union. The Central Congress, elected on the basis of population, which put the Russian nationality in a dominant position, was supplemented by a "council of nationalities." It is one of the two chambers of the legislative and administrative government of the country; no legislation involving national rights may be passed without it. Besides this legal status of equality, a policy was adopted assisting the more backward nationalities in their economic and cultural development, which alone could give them actual equality with the more developed nationalities. New industrial centers were established, modern methods of agriculture and irrigation introduced, peasant and handicraft co-operatives organized. Every national republic was encouraged in the fullest development of a culture, "national in form, socialist in content."

The meaning of that phrase, "national in form and socialist in content," was vividly expressed for me by a Jew of Birobidjan, the autonomous Jewish territory rising in the Soviet Far East. "We distinguish between nationalism and nationality," he said. "If we should claim that the Jews are a chosen people, the best and brainiest in the world, that's nationalism. It's dangerous nonsense, the kind of murderous nonsense that leads Turks to

attack Armenians or white Americans to lynch Negroes. The assertion of the right of one culture to dominate another, or even to pre-eminence—that is the capitalist wish to exploit, and it leads to war. We have no right to exploit or to claim pre-eminence; but we have the same rights as others to develop our own characteristic culture in peace. The free development of all kinds of national culture adds to the variety and significance of the world. Our policy in this matter is part of the Soviet respect for human individuality—which again is different from individualism. We have no respect for the individuals who hold back history; but all those individuals who help push history forward—workers, writers, all productive elements—must be helped to fullest expression. Hence the Soviet Union has respect for even the smallest national culture, since each of them enriches all human culture and each of them is unique. Eventually, we shall no doubt all merge in one nation and one language, but the road to it is not by suppression and impoverishment, but by the fullest development of all variety."

National prejudices still exist in the minds of some Russians, due to their past privilege of superiority. National grudges still remain in the minds of formerly suppressed peoples, who long learned to distrust the Russians. These form the final

problem. If they lead to even minor conflicts based on nationality, they are firmly dealt with. Ordinary drunken brawls between Russians may be lightly handled as misdemeanors, but let a brawl occur between a Russian and a Jew in which national names are used in a way insulting to national dignity, and this becomes a serious political offense. Usually, the remnants of national antagonisms require no such drastic methods; they yield to education. But the American workers who helped build the Stalingrad Tractor Plant will long remember the clash which Lewis and Brown had with the Soviet courts after their fight with the Negro Robinson, in the course of which they called him "damn low-down nigger." The two white men went back to America, disgraced in Soviet eyes by a serious political offense; the Negro remained and is now a member of the Moscow City Government.

What has been the result of this national policy of the Communists, applied to people in all stages of development from the nomads of the great plains to the proudly cultured Georgians? It has welded the strength of scores of formerly subject peoples around the Revolution and enabled the Russian workers to beat back their enemies. It has abolished age-long hates with unbelievable speed. It has released tremendous energy of de-

votion which gave a great economic and cultural impetus. It has dealt a mortal blow to that legend of "inferior" and "superior" races into which capitalism divided the earth, the former of which are the doomed objects of exploitation, while the latter bear "the white man's burden"—the mission to exploit. Over against this legend, exalted today by fascism into a religion, stands the whole experience of the USSR. The liberated non-European nations, once drawn into the channel of Soviet development, are no less capable than Europeans of truly progressive civilization.

New centers of industry have risen in the national republics more rapidly than in the rest of the Soviet Union, as part of the Communist policy to "equalize the backward districts with the center." During the first Five-Year Plan, when the industrial output of the entire country doubled, it increased 3.5 times in the national republics. The increase was most rapid in the most backward; the great plains of Kazakstan saw a 4.5 times increase in industrial output, while the Central Asian Republics attained a sixfold growth. Based on these economic achievements was the growth in education and culture. Seventy nationalities adopted the Latin alphabet during the first Five-Year Plan. Many nationalities had no alphabet at all before the Revolution; they received their written language

as a gift from the Soviet power. Among all the nations spectacular increases had been made in literacy, in the growth of books and in the arts. The first All-Union Theatrical Olympiad held some years ago showed that many nations have developed a truly national theater, which in some cases has already reached the level of high art.

An important chapter in Soviet national policy is the story of how ten million nomads are being transformed into stable farmers. The Kirghiz, the Kalmyk, the Gypsy, the reindeer herders of the Far North and the mountain people of Central Asia and the Caucasus—tribes which for centuries led a semi-barbaric existence under the threefold oppression of the tsars' officials, their native chieftains and the medicine men—are already developing collective farms. Seven million of those who roamed the plains and hills and tundra have already settled; it is planned to settle the remaining three million by the end of the second Five-Year Plan. The Soviet Government gave them land for tilling and pasture; irrigated their fields; provided money and building materials for barns and blacksmith shops, homes and bath-houses, for the purchase of livestock and seed. Soviet farm experts taught them methods of farm cultivation.

Especially picturesque are the peoples of the Arctic tundra. Twenty-six nations have been

listed in this vast region, the most populous of which, that of the Tunguz, numbers only 60,000. Before the Revolution none of these peoples had an alphabet, a written language or a school. Today most of them have received a written language, and printed books. Several hundred schools in the native tongue have pushed their way along the Arctic coast, some traveling with the reindeer herds of the nomads, others building dormitories where children spend the winter.

"Once they looked upon us as wild beasts," wrote a member of the Nentsi people, reindeer herders of the North. "There are still Nentsi living who were exhibited in the tsarist time in zoological gardens of Russia and foreign lands. They called us 'Samoyeds' (cannibals) and the tsar's government legalized this as our shameful name—but now we begin to sing new songs. For our tundra is new. An experimental farm center has risen beyond the Arctic circle; we have raised vegetables! On the Pechora meadows has appeared the first tractor. When the first radio came, how it frightened us Nentsi. But now every day the number of literate people grows."

During the past year many of the national republics celebrated their fifteenth anniversary. Briefly they flamed across the columns of the Soviet press—Daghestan with its thirty languages;

Kazakstan, largest and most arid of all the republics; northern Karelia of forests and marble mountains, "where every fisherman has a lake of his own"; far-south Armenia, centuries old in civilization and suffering: each of them told its achievements under Soviet power.

To Alma-Ata, new capital of the yellow-skinned, once nomad, Kazaks, who, as late as 1919 were believed by one of their own nationalist leaders to be "doomed to a slow death," came a congress of 748 scientific and cultural workers to report on the country's educational growth. Before the Revolution there were 13,000 children in the schools of this vast area; now there are half a million. A national theater, an opera, a symphony orchestra, seventeen institutions of higher learning are counted among the cultural achievements. They arise on the industrial basis of Karaganda copper, the Turksib railroad, the great mines at Ridder, the Emba-Orsk oil pipeline.

On the borders of Afghanistan the youngest Soviet republic, the Tajiks, celebrated ten years of existence. Soviet power has meant to them 100 million rubles' worth of irrigation, the erection of great textile plants, the sinking of mines, the creation of a network of technical schools. Scientific excursions have mapped their high Pamirs, finding gold and precious minerals on the slopes. Tens of

thousands of tractors, plows, harrows and modern farm implements have come to the cotton fields where once the camel pulled the wooden plow. On the site of an ancient village has grown the new capital, Stalinabad, an industrial center. Airplanes land in mountain villages whose inhabitants before the Revolution never saw a wheeled cart. Soviet power found only half of one per cent of the Tajiks literate; today nine-tenths of the children attend public school.

One by one the list unrolls of 182 nationalities, which have created industries, modern farming, schools and a national culture under Soviet power. Nor are the nationalities mere recipients of blessings from the more advanced Russians. Creative energy pours increasingly from them all to enrich their common Soviet life. Some of the smaller nationalities have already made records which place them in the vanguard of the Soviet Union. Armenia, once ravaged by national massacres, is today a model republic of the Transcaucasus, celebrated for its thriving industries. Kabardino-Balkaria, a district of two Mohammedan peoples on the northern slopes of the Caucasus, has created the most famous collective farms of the USSR. It developed the idea of "socialist farm-cities" designed by architects, which is spreading through the whole Soviet Union, and the policy of making

older farmers inspectors of quality, which brought happiness and self-respect to hundreds of thousands of aged men in the Soviet land.

The devotion of suppressed peoples, both within and without its borders, is the prize which the Soviet national policy has won. "Soviet power is to toiling Kazaks like rain in the desert," is a proverb of the Kazak old men quoted in the Soviet press by Kliumov, eighteen-year-old president of a Kazak village. "The Party of Lenin and Stalin has resurrected peoples from the dead, peoples who were less than dust. Now these peoples have themselves conquered the earth and have come to report their victory to their leader," said the Tajik poet Lahuti, arriving in Moscow with a delegation of triumphant record-making cotton-pickers. "The past is a stairway of years carpeted with pain and beggary," said Arith Shakirov, one of the cotton-pickers. "The Uzbeks feared to go along the road of the Arabs; the Tajiks carried sticks when they walked through the Uzbek quarter. Hardly anyone could read. The past is gone. On its ruins we build a bright new life. Woe unto anyone who tries to take it away from us."

When Turkoman horsemen made a spectacular run from their capital, Ashkhabad, to Moscow, in August, 1935, the cities through which they passed on their 4,300-kilometer way were decorated to

meet them. "From beyond the boundless expanse of our great fatherland, across the hot sands of the Kara-Kum, the Ust-Urta steppes and the limitless collective fields," thus ran their greeting. They spoke of the "invincible brotherhood of nations replacing the prison of nations—tsarist Russia—which has gone into the past never to return." One of the group, Chary Kary, had been in Moscow before. "But then," he said, "it was the city of my enemy and every person in it seemed my personal foe. Now Moscow is the heart of my great fatherland and every nationality in it is my nation."

"The friendship between the peoples of the USSR is a great and signal victory," said Stalin to one of those many delegations of Central Asiatic workers who stormed the Kremlin with their exploits in late 1935. "As long as this friendship exists the people of our country shall be free and invincible." But the influence of the Soviet national policy goes far beyond its borders. More than any other Soviet policy it has undermined the imperialisms of the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE TECHNIQUE OF LEADERSHIP

> "Among the masses of people, we are but drops in the ocean, and we will be able to govern only when we properly express that which the people appreciate. Without this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not take the lead of the masses, and the whole machine will fall to pieces."
>
> LENIN at Eleventh Party Congress.

If by some cataclysm of war a section of the Soviet Union should be cut off from Moscow and compelled for a time to exist alone, government in these isolated areas would continue unchanged except insofar as it was crushed by invading armies. A picturesque example of this was given me by a Yakut woman, who boasted that her district of forests and tundra a thousand miles north of the Trans-Siberian Railway had had "Soviet Power" continuously since 1917. The years of civil war that raged along the railway had never penetrated so far north. To my query how this backward bit of territory knew what policies to follow she replied that a few Bolshevik exiles had remained

among them and they got occasional news from Moscow over the Great Northern Telegraph which traversed their region. Many other sections of the country were isolated during the Civil War for considerable periods, yet continued to follow a common policy.

For eighteen years the authority of the Communist Party in the life of the Soviet Union has grown steadily stronger; it has kept power now for a considerably longer time than any Party in any other country in the world. The accumulating discontents which in other lands throw out governments do not seem to worry it. The Party itself organizes discontent for the sake of progress. In spite of exposures of graft, inefficiency, bureacracy, and stupid excesses—indeed through these very exposures—the hold of the Communist Party increases.

To manage the state affairs of the most extensive republic on earth—covering one-sixth of the world's land surface—might be considered enough for a political party. But to run the state is only one of the Communists' tasks. For their plan of remaking the world the apparatus of government is insufficient. Great popular organizations like trade unions, co-operatives, physical culture societies and scores of voluntary social agencies must also move in a common, yet flexible plan. But the

action of these organizations must be voluntary, arousing the initiative of their members, or their energy and life will die.

How then does the Communist Party lead the country? By the energy and discipline of its members, their contact with all organizations in the land, and by the authority of repeated success. In all government bodies and voluntary organizations the Communists belonging to them act together to induce them to follow the "Party Line." This line, however, while firm, is not rigid; Party policy itself grows from the discussions and active struggles of its members, each of whom is in touch with some aspect of the country's life. The members serve as a living conscious bridge between the Party and all the other organizations. They explain to the Party the desires of the people with whom they are associated, and explain to the people the policies developed by the Party in regard to their demands.

The primary Party organizations are set up in factories, offices, state farms, red army units, universities, villages, in any institution which has three Party members or more. In a typical iron and steel plant in the Ukraine, for instance, where 1,600 persons—workers, engineers, office staff—work in the rolling mill, 55 are Party members, 85 belong to the Young Communist League and 30

are enrolled as "sympathizers," an organized group which is studying Communism with the presumable intent to join the Party. One Communist is paid a salary by the Party as full time organizer; the others are scattered in ordinary jobs through all the working gangs of the factory. Each of them has his assigned "Party work." Some are editors of the sixteen "wall newspapers" which are posted in every working gang of the mill, filled with news and discussions of the gang's successes and failures. Others read regular newspapers aloud during lunch hour and conduct discussions on current events. Others stir up "socialist competition" between different working gangs so that skill and production may increase. Others are active in the trade union or help promote sports. Every Communist, Young Communist and sympathizer does some unpaid public work of this kind; those who had none or failed to do it would be dropped from the Party as "passive."

Some years ago I visited an open meeting of a Party organization in a factory near Moscow. Not only the Communists but many non-members had gathered to hear the semi-annual report of the Party secretary of the plant. As he sat down a storm of questions arose. "Why have we no report about the Young Pioneers? . . . Has the Party looked into the question of our workers'

club building and observed that we have no summer playground? Why haven't we a sanitary organization? Why haven't we a 'Friends of Aviation'? Does the co-operative housing organization report regularly to the Party, and if so, when are we going to get the houses?" From the secretary's answers it became clear that this factory had many voluntary organizations among its members: a "Friends for Children," an "International Labor Defense," an organization to "Increase Production," a "Society for Contacts with Rural Districts," and many more. All of these had been launched with Party co-operation, usually first as small committees, and had then grown into larger organizations by the influx of people who were not Communists. The number of organizations that would be started would depend partly on popular demand and partly on the capacity of Party members to stimulate and organize interest. It would be difficult for an organization to start without Party sanction; it would not be precisely forbidden, but a score of difficulties would discourage it. On the other hand, if a popular demand arose for any new kind of organization—from a drama club to an Anti-Tuberculosis Society—some Party members would take part in it either on their own initiative or by request of the workers or the Party, and would be expected by everyone to keep

the organization in touch with any Party policies which affected it.

There were several ironic remarks and cat-calls in the meeting during a report by the plant's director, who was clearly not popular with the workers. I happened to know that the Party secretary had recently recommended to the higher organizations that the director be removed to some other plant where he could profit by the mistakes he had made in this one and start without the accumulated friction. The manager also knew that his transfer had been recommended, and quite possibly concurred. At the meeting, however, the Party secretary said no word of this recommendation but put himself in the unenviable position of explaining the manager's actions to a group which was almost howling him down. Both he and the manager were disciplined Communists, who did not wish to increase dissension but to work together for the good of the plant.

The proportion of Communists in rural districts is very much less than in factories, as might be expected from the fact that the factory workers were the most active elements in the Revolution and also more literate than the peasants. A typical Party organization in a village of two hundred families—I take here the collective farm "Postishev" in the Ukraine—has five Party members,

ten "sympathizers," and twenty-seven members of the Young Communist League. The latter organization is nearly always much larger than the Party in the villages, since it is the youth on the farms which is progressive.

Of the five Party members in this village, one of them, Povlichenko, is organizer, giving full time to Party work. He was born in the village, worked some years in a city factory, and was sent back in 1931 on Party order to help organize collectivization. From comments of peasant women I judge he was high-handed in that period and stirred up some antagonisms which he has not lived down. He is, however, a very energetic person, a once half-starved, half-educated farmhand with a passion for schooling which the Revolution enabled him to realize. He runs the Party school where members study Party history and current politics, teaches an elementary course in Leninism and the Soviet Constitution for the sympathizers, and organizes talks and discussions on special events, such as Party congresses, or new decrees affecting the farms. At the time of my visit these remote villagers were studying, more or less assiduously, the reports of Dimitroff and others at the recent congress of the Communist International. Povlichenko also takes active part in pushing the local school, the village club, the motion pictures,

the local newspaper and all forms of education and culture.

The second Communist is a local peasant, president of the collective farm since 1931, but now leaving for a three-year course in an agricultural school. His salary comes from the farm, not from the Party. The third is an electrician sent to this village because "we needed a Communist in every field brigade." When he came he was entirely ignorant of farming, but his craft made him useful in a village just beginning to import electricity from the great power plant on the Dnieper. Recently the Party planned to transfer him to township work, but the local farmers checked this by electing him president of the village. "The Party," he said, "always considers the desires of the masses." He may or may not have helped organize those desires. For Party work he is attached to the third field brigade and is also adviser of the Young Communist League. The fourth party member is a woman who earns her living as saleswoman in the co-operative store, and whose Party assignment is to help the village women organize a day nursery, a first-aid society and get vacation on pay from the collective farm at time of childbirth. This right is automatic in state-owned enterprises, but not all the farmers' organizations give it yet. The fifth Party member

is manager of the local co-operative store, who, since he makes twenty or more trips to the city every month, is used by the Party for city contacts rather than for regular village work.

It is plain that these five Party members have their hands on the whole life of the village. Besides their general work, the first three each keep in touch with a different field brigade of forty or more workers whom they are expected to know personally. "I must know what they want, their economic conditions and working abilities. This is called political watchfulness. If we did not know this, it would be bad for us. We could not possibly lead the masses," said Povlichenko.

The Party organization of this village is open to criticism from strict Party principles in that its members hold too many local government jobs. They are supposed to keep a better balance between office-holders and members "in production," and to stimulate and train non-Party people for some of the government work. Hogging the offices by Party members is considered a bad sign; it means that they have not stirred up wide enough interest. The Postishev organization is trying to do this through their work with the ten sympathizers and the Young Communists, each of whom has also Party work of a less responsible character. They read and discuss the newspapers in the field

brigades, organize traveling libraries, chess games, football teams, initiate competitions in reaping and threshing, help start the musical or dramatic circle, or assist in the "cottage laboratory" where sixty farmers are studying scientific methods.

These primary Party organizations are correlated by the township [1] organization which in turn comes under the larger regions up to the All-Union organization. The lower bodies elect the higher but are in turn subordinate to their decisions; the system is known as "democratic centralism." The highest power within each organization is vested in its general meeting or congress which elects a standing committee to serve between sessions. The highest power of the entire Party is the All-Union Party Congress and between its sessions the Central Committee. The Central Committee organizes a political bureau for the day-by-day determination of political policy, an organizational bureau for general guidance of organizational work, and a secretariat. Stalin is general secretary of the Party, but there are several other secretaries who share this work.

Some years ago I saw a district congress of the Communist Party in action in the city of Red Lugansk of the Donetz Basin, the valley of coal and steel. Four or five hundred men and women

[1] *Rayon*, a district about equivalent to a township.

gathered for a two day session—miners and mine managers, employees and head of the locomotive works, some teachers and health department officials—Communists all, sent as delegates from the local Party organizations of the factories and mines of the district. The problems for discussion were the policy for heavy industry and for minor nationalities. They had been announced by the Central Committee as the immediate pressing problems; "theses" on them had been published by the leading authorities and every local Party organization had discussed them for weeks.

The delegates wasted no time in preliminaries and compliments. Man after man spoke hotly and strongly on the concrete difficulties of heavy industry in the mines and factories they knew. They prepared reports based on the industry of their district and elected delegates to carry their hottest criticisms to the regional Party Congress in the coal center, Bakhmut, where delegates were again chosen to the All-Ukrainian Party Congress. Then all over the Soviet Union the special trains began running. From Kharkov, from Tiflis, from Minsk, from Central Asia and Siberia, they bore the chosen delegates to Moscow where two weeks' discussion in the All-Union Party Congress hammered out the "Party Line." Thence the results rolled back again to the Donetz, the Caucasus, the

Far East to Vladivostok, borne by returning delegates whose first duty was to explain and carry through the decisions through trade unions, cooperatives, farms, government, whatever organizations they influenced.

This is the most widely organized thinking ever attempted in history. It is actually the energetic thinking of three million men and women, gathering up the ideas of tens of millions of their neighbors, which beats upon the All-Union Party Congress and affects its decisions. The ideas are worked over by the ablest economists of the Party, familiar with the experience of the revolutionary movement in all countries. The decisions reached are explained to the country through every channel of organized publicity; they are discussed and studied in every field brigade and factory and put into action simultaneously throughout the land. For the test of organized thinking is organized action.

The Communists do not merely reflect the will of the masses, as a ballot might, or a showing of hands. They do not merely analyze what the "majority want" and hand it out. It is their job to lead, to organize the people's will. No group of unurged soldiers would ever vote to storm a trench. Certainly the workers of the Soviet Union would not have voted, unurged, unled, for

the hardships of the Five-Year Plan of rapid industrialization taken out of their own food and comforts, for the painful speed of farm collectivization without adequate machines or organizers. But when the Communist Party analyzed, urged and demanded, showing the world situation and the need of making the USSR well prepared industrially and for defense, showing the enemy classes which must be abolished to attain the goal of a socialist state, they were able to find, organize and create, deep in the heart of the masses, a will that carried through. Without that will in tens of millions, the three million could have done little. "To bring about a revolution, a leading revolutionary minority is required," Stalin told H. G. Wells. "But the most talented, devoted and energetic minority would be helpless if it did not rely upon the at least passive support of millions." [2]

As an example of the interrelation of Party, government and voluntary workers in action, let me take the "mobilization" of automobiles and mechanics in the spring of 1931 to save flax sowing in Moscow province. Collective farming came that year to the province in a great drive of organization and propaganda backed by hundreds of new tractors, which were being used chiefly to increase the area of flax. In the first week of sowing, tele-

[2] H. G. Wells' Interview with Joseph Stalin, July 23, 1934.

grams from the newly organized tractor stations poured into Moscow, announcing that there was a "break." Tractors all over the province stood in the fields, not moving, for causes yet to be analyzed.

Who moves in such a case? The Moscow Committee of the Party moves. Sorting over in its office the reports of all Moscow's daily emergencies, it decides that the break in flax is serious and calls for a "mobilization" of mechanics.

The call goes out to Party organizations in a hundred shops and factories. It is announced by trade-union shop committees and factory newspapers. Not a single mechanic is compelled to answer, but any mechanic willing to give a day or two for tractor repair to help the sowing will be helped by foreman and fellow workers to arrange his job. He may work at this sanctioned public task without forfeiting wages, while others fill in the gap in his regular work. What is the motive? The fun of participating in saving the sowing, of helping the country, of living a varied, useful life. Automobiles also are "mobilized" to carry the mechanics to the farms, and those who lend machines for such public work may hope for a cut in automobile taxes. I volunteered for a two-day trip.

One hundred and fifty miles north of Moscow

we came to the tractor station to which we were assigned. Of thirty-three new tractors from Putiloff Works, eleven could not move out of the railway station. The rest were breaking down in the fields, under the hands of worried peasant boys and girls who had seen their first machine one month before. All night our volunteer mechanics repaired tractors. All night the local tractor drivers stood up to watch in their eagerness to learn. The following day I drove my car to Moscow with sleeping mechanics in the seats. They had worked twenty hours on end in a public emergency about which they would report next morning to their interested fellow workers in Moscow factories. They had also prepared a technical report charging the Putiloff tractor with certain grave defects. It was printed within two days in the *Industrial Gazette*, the organ of heavy industry, and led to a conference of industrial leaders on improving the Putiloff tractor. Three weeks later the flax sowing of Moscow province, which in early season threatened to lag at 50 per cent of plan, went over the top at 108 per cent, the best flax record in the Union.

"It was the work of the social organizations that saved us," said the Moscow Tractor Center. What were the organizations concerned? The state, the Party, the trade unions, the automobile association

had all taken part. The state owned the Putiloff Works, financed the tractor stations, and also owned, through the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, the *Industrial Gazette* which exposed the defects. The trade unions organized the volunteers and took care of their jobs during absence. The automobile association organized autos. But the driving will that saved the situation was the will of thousands of Moscow workers organized and assigned to their tasks by the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party, of which most of the mechanics were not even members.

Even on vacations Communists are supposed to be always watchfully aware of their responsibility for organizing the life of the country. I was slipping down the mighty Volga on a large passenger steamer when I saw a sign asking members of the Party who might be traveling to register with the secretary of the boat organization. I learned that any Communist traveling on the boat was likely to be drafted into speaking at a meeting on deck among the peasants, or at a political school for Communists of the crew. Some of the city Communists used the occasion to criticize hotly the boat Communists for lack of attention to sanitation. The river Communists, mostly untrained sailors, thus got their first lesson in modern hygiene.

The ultimate destination towards which the Soviet ship of state is steering was fixed by the Revolution. The rate of speed and the daily and yearly course is charted by the Central Committee of the Party to take advantage of varying winds and tides. Yet it is a course which every active worker or farmer may take part in fixing. It arises from the experience of three million Party members, each keeping in touch with some section of the people, all of them interacting, discussing, comparing results. Communists of longest experience and best records have the greatest authority; but, be it noted, they do not call it "power." "Power" resides in the will of the working masses; "authority" is that prestige of character and insight which enables its possessor to organize and release this power.

It is authority rather than power that Stalin possesses. Though his standing is far higher than that of any man in the Soviet Union, though he is cheered and quoted at all congresses as high authority, men never speak of "Stalin's will" or "Stalin's power," but of the "Party Line" which Stalin reports but does not make. The Party Line is accessible to all to study, to know and to help formulate. The greatness of the man is known by the range over which he can do this. "I can plan with the workers of one plant for a year," said

a factory manager to me. "Others much wiser than I, like the men in our Central Committee, can plan with wider masses for years. Stalin in this is our ablest. He sees the inter-relation of our path with world events, and the order of each step, as a man sees the earth from the stratosphere."

"The earth from the stratosphere"—the man who said this was himself an aviation engineer. Men in the Soviet Union tend to see Stalin in terms of their craft. Railway workers call him "locomotive driver of the Revolution." An economist said to me, speaking of the leaders of Party and government in the Red Square on May-day: "Our brains are there in the tribune." Harvester-combine operators addressed Stalin as "friend and teacher"; managers of industry say informally "the boss." Yellow-skinned Kazaks of the desert on the fifteenth anniversary of their republic hailed him "great leader of toiling humanity."

Millions of simple folk in all callings have felt the direct impact of Stalin's analysis, giving a solution for the chief problem of their lives. It was sometimes a way that was harsh to follow, but it was the one clear path to the goal that the millions desired. There have been statements by Stalin that ushered in great changes, as when he told the agrarian Marxist conference that the time had come to "abolish kulaks as a class." Yet he only an-

nounced the time for a process which every Marxist knew was on the program. His famous article "Dizziness from Success" which called sudden halt on March 2, 1930, to widespread excesses of Communists in rural regions, was regarded by foreign correspondents and peasants alike as an "order from Stalin." Stalin at once disclaimed any personal prestige therefrom accruing, stating in the press: "Some people think that the article is the result of the personal initiative of Stalin. That of course is nonsense. The Central Committee does not exist to permit personal initiative of anybody in matters of this kind. It was a reconnaissance undertaken by the Central Committee."

Stalin does not rule personally. To a lifelong habit of collective action he adds his personal genius, that of supreme analyst of situations, personalities, tendencies. He leads as supreme combiner of many minds and wills. When Emil Ludwig asked him who really made decisions, he answered: "Single persons cannot decide. . . . Experience of three revolutions has shown us that out of a hundred individual decisions which have not been tested and corrected collectively, ninety are biased. The leadership of our Party in the Central Committee, which directs all the Soviet and Communist organizations, consists of about

seventy people. Among those seventy members of our Central Committee there are to be found the best of our industrial leaders, our cleverest specialists and the men who best understand every branch of our activities. It is in this Supreme Council that the whole wisdom of our Party is concentrated. Each man is entitled to challenge his neighbor's opinion or suggestion. Each man may give the benefit of his own experience. If it were otherwise, if individual decisions were admitted, there would be serious mistakes in our work." [3]

"The art of leadership is a serious matter," said Stalin earlier, in concluding his article "Dizziness from Success." "One must not lag behind a movement because to do so is to become isolated from the masses. But one must not rush ahead, for this is to lose contact with the masses. . . . Our Party is strong and invincible because, while leading a movement, it knows how to maintain and multiply its contacts with the millions of the workers and peasant masses." This may be taken as Stalin's analysis of leadership.

There are plenty of stupidities and violences in the Soviet Union, yes-men and careerists, hardship and injustice, wastage of youth and life. All man's essential progress costs heavily in human suffering; the Soviet Union has not escaped this law. What

[3] Joseph Stalin's Interview with Emil Ludwig, Dec. 13, 1931.

makes it endurable is just this fact that it is caused not by behest of one man or even of three million, but is part of the slow process—history will not call it slow—whereby the tens of millions achieve the organized and conscious planning of their lives.

CHAPTER VII

BUILDING THE NEW ECONOMY

"Either perish or overtake the advanced countries and surpass them. . . . This is how history has put the question." LENIN.

"Millions make the plan." STALIN.

One of the most striking characteristics of Soviet life to a new arrival is the passionate interest which citizens show in new industries, modern equipment, figures of carloadings, economic statistics generally. The "romantic passion" of the Russians for machinery, the visitor is apt to call it. He himself is long since bored by machinery which has recently put him out of work; he finds it difficult to understand this passion. He has come to see "the revolution," to study the characteristics of planned economy or the amazing change in human concepts. He finds the revolutionary background taken for granted by Soviet citizens; they want to show him factories.

The mood of the Soviet Union today is a mood of tremendous struggle and incredible conquest in which individual values and problems pale before

the brightness of one great problem whose solution is told off by the ever-rising curve of production, the opening of steel mills, the successful mastery of tractor plants, machine building works, textile factories. It is a mood in which a newly literate servant girl will hail the rain running into her leaky shoes if that rain means harvest. Harvest somewhere far off on farms she never sees.

It is not surprising that economic facts have a vital interest for Soviet citizens. The changes in the country's economic life since the Revolution have been stupendous and the results are felt in every person's daily living. Fifteen years ago when first I entered the Soviet Union, the country was ravaged by famine and pestilence. Civil war and foreign intervention had ruined farming, industry, transport. Street-cars were not running in Moscow, street lights had long since burned out without replacements, and two fuelless winters had so destroyed the entire city's plumbing that water pressure could not rise above the second floors. In the best hospital of Samara, where I lay ill in 1921 with typhus, there were but two clinical thermometers for hundreds of patients. Thermometers, light bulbs, water pipes were only a few of the million articles which long war and blockade kept out of the Soviet Union and which could not

be manufactured in the few and backward factories of that vast agricultural land.

I have lived through fifteen years of incredibly rapid progress which have almost wiped out all memory of the past. To dwellers in the Soviet Union, the pre-war period seems already prehistoric, and even 1921 seems a century ago. We have seen in these fifteen years a more than tenfold increase in industrial production; we have seen a leap in farming from the sixteenth century into the twenty-first. We have lived through a series of epochs sharply distinct from each other in the regulations affecting our daily existence, but all these periods have been characterized by one continuous fury of energetic endeavor.

The reasons for energetic endeavor were very plain to the people of a land just emerging from foreign intervention and long blockade. "War is implacable," said Lenin. "It puts the question with merciless sharpness. Either perish or overtake the advanced countries and surpass them. . . . Either full steam ahead or perish. This is how history has put the question." [1] All Communists hold that in the present epoch of worldwide imperialist expansion, it is the fate of economically backward lands to be parceled out among the imperial na-

[1] Quoted by Stalin in Report on *Results of the First Five-Year Plan.*

tions. Soviet Russia, unless she could make herself economically independent, had to fear the fate which has overtaken China, "a military field of operations of foreign enemies and pecked at by everybody who cares to do so." [2]

If a rapid rate of economic development was necessary to preserve even the independence of the country, it was still more necessary as a prerequisite for a socialist commonwealth. The abundant life for every toiler which socialism implies demands lavish production; it cannot be attained in a country where the means of production is the individually owned tool. The material conditions for a prosperous socialist commonwealth exist today in America far more than they ever existed in Russia. Sharing the wealth cannot take place until there is really wealth to share. Socially owned wealth must be based on socially owned factories. Russia had the problem of first building the factories.

The rapid development of Soviet Russia's economic wealth was considered of crucial importance by Lenin, not only for the welfare of the Russian people, but even for the future of world-wide socialism. Faced by the handicap of a backward, semi-feudal land, the workers of the new revolutionary country had nonetheless one advantage—

[2] Stalin, *Results of the First Five-Year Plan.*

they were the joint owners of their country and all of its productive wealth. They must prove to the world that even against great difficulties this one advantage was decisive. Even in 1921 in the depths of economic ruin Lenin said: "We are exercising our main influence on the international revolution by our economic policy. All eyes are turned on the Soviet Russian republic. . . . If we solve this problem, then we shall have won on an international scale for certain and finally. That is why questions of economic construction assume for us absolutely exceptional significance."[3]

There is a strange paradox in the economic development of the Soviet Union which every foreign resident must notice. It is that every slight achievement costs infinite effort, yet mighty achievements are won in an incredibly short time. The penalty for Russia's ancient backwardness is to be found in an inefficiency which hampers every movement—taking a tramway, buying a spool of thread, securing a room. The difficulty of making even one blast furnace function properly arouses frantic despair in the hearts of foreign specialists. Yet in spite of these difficulties, the Soviet Union advances at a speed unknown even to the most efficient capitalist countries.

[3] May 28, 1921. *All-Russian Conference of the Communist Party.*

This speed is due to the tremendous energy and initiative of millions of workers and farmers who are conscious owners now of their own means of production, and who know that whatever they create will be their own permanent gain. Their initiative is correlated by a system of social planning. Thus arises that paradoxical combination of individual inefficiency with tremendous social momentum. In the most developed capitalist countries the efficiencies of ten million individuals pull in conflicting directions, giving small gain to society. But each new achievement in the Soviet planned structure, attained with such painful difficulty, reinforces the sum total of a million gains.

So obvious and so widely known are these benefits of social planning in the Soviet Union that in recent years it has become a common dream in many countries to transfer painlessly the technique of planning to the capitalist system, thus gaining the blessings of socialism without the harsh shock of revolution. In America especially, where the highly developed processes of production could so obviously produce plenty for all, the illusion arises that somehow some genius, some group of superbrains sitting in New York or in Washington, ought to be able to find the magic secret of putting those processes to work. It is clear that an individual owner can plan his factory and bring it to a

relatively high state of efficiency as compared with the days of handicraft. But can a government brain trust, however brilliant, plan the disposal of Rockefeller's oil wells, or the internal organization of U. S. Steel? To ask this question is to answer it, if it has not been answered already by the history of the NRA. Only owners can plan an industry and dispose of its products. Under capitalism plans of different owners clash.

For a socialist state, the simplest and most basic act of government is the planning by worker-owners of the expansion and improvement of their jointly owned properties. Planning of this type takes place not only in those central institutions of Moscow where the foreign visitor habitually looks for it; it begins simultaneously at the workers' bench. Production meetings after work discuss shop problems, what holds back production, how much it can be increased, and by what means. These discussions are enlarged on a factory scale; they go from the factory to the central offices of the industrial trusts. Word comes back from the central organizations to the shop that the country needs certain new machines. "Can we make them in our plant?" Delegates from other industries which need the machines arrive, explain, mutually consult. The inventions and suggestions of the local workers thus widen into a nation's plan.

The plan is, however, no mere blueprint to be fulfilled with exactness. In the absolute and technical sense, one cannot speak of it as a final "plan" at all. For although every factory, farm, school and government institution checks its monthly and annual achievements by its plan, yet the proudest boast is always to have overfulfilled it, i.e., broken the plan by doing more than intended. The plan is therefore a standard of what is expected, a flag of challenge, but in no sense a limit. There is no limit set in the Soviet Union. The aim is the fullest development of the creative and productive powers of the country. The more production, the better. It will be seen at once how impossible such a conception of planning becomes under capitalism. It is based on the assumption that the worker-owners of the nation's production will be able to use everything that they care to make.

Socialism is not created in a day; it is not achieved by voting and not even by seizure of power. Seizure of power is only a prerequisite. Socialism involves the expansion and organization of the collectively owned properties of the country and the building of a good life for everyone thereon. This was the purpose of the October Revolution, and in spite of all the accounts in the press of the world for eighteen years about Soviet

"changes of policy," this purpose has never changed in the slightest degree. The tactics used have, however, been conditioned by both internal strength and international relations. Not until 1921, when the new workers' state had beaten back the armies of intervention, was it possible to begin the building of the national economy.

When the wars of invasion were over, industry had sunk to one-fifth of pre-war, the production of cotton goods was only 7 per cent of normal, iron and steel production had almost entirely ceased. Grain reserves were exhausted, and the drought of 1921 led directly to the greatest famine in Russian history. The New Economic Policy, adopted at that time, encouraged all forms of economic development, both those of capitalism and those of socialism. Meantime each year the Communists led the working class of the country to concentrate a desperate, organized struggle for victory in one important field after another—victories often achieved at the expense of heavy temporary sacrifices elsewhere.

The year 1922 saw the successful fight to establish a state bank and a partially stable currency by high banking charges which ruthlessly exploited all the industries of the country. In 1923 emphasis turned to the hard-pressed industries; for the first

time since the revolution, their balance sheets reached "self-support," at the expense of excessively high prices to the consumer. There followed a two years' effort to cut prices; consumers' cooperatives were widely developed as a link between the state factories and the peasants. By 1926 cooperative and government trade had increased threefold, successfully passing the private middleman who had previously controlled over 80 per cent of the rural turnover. During the next two years, emphasis turned again to the restoration of industry, which reached by 1928 the pre-war standard of production. The Soviet workers had rebuilt their war-devastated country without the aid of the foreign credits which flowed to help all the war-injured capitalist lands of Europe.

Yet this attainment was still of low standard, the pre-war production of backward tsarist Russia. The ancient plants were working to full capacity, but they could not begin to supply the needs of workers and farmers who expected a higher standard of life than before the Revolution. Each year the shortage of goods increased. Soviet industry could not expand further except by extension of basic capital, new buildings, more machines. Any threatening war would still find the country lacking not only in commodities, but in that heavy in-

dustry on which, in our modern mechanized world, is based the means of production in peace and of defense in war.

Could Soviet Russia develop her industries rapidly and make herself economically independent, or must she live, as tsarist Russia did, by export of farm products, chancing her future on a hostile capitalist world? This problem set sharply the still more fundamental problem whether socialism could be built in one country and if so, by what means. Russia's basic industry was state-owned but this industry was insufficient to supply the people with goods. The primitive farming system, made still more primitive by the splitting up of the former landlords' estates into small subsistence farms, which partly consumed and partly wasted much formerly marketed grain, was increasingly failing to feed the growing cities. In 1927 the Russian farms attained the pre-war sown area of 280,000,000 acres and the pre-war grain production of somewhat over 80,000,000 tons, but only about half of the pre-war marketed grain was reaching the market. Socialized industry was like an island in an ocean of medieval agriculture, whose tides constantly threatened to undermine the base of socialism. "As long as we live in a small peasant country," Lenin had said, "there will

be a more solid economic basis for capitalism than for Communism."[4]

Farming must be brought out of the Middle Ages, modernized and made efficient. For this two roads of development were possible. The employing peasants, known as kulaks, who already owned the best of the rural means of production, better plows, more horses, occasional threshers, creameries and flour mills, might be allowed to expand, to acquire tractors, combines, and the additional land which these machines could cultivate, dispossessing more and more landless peasants into the ranks of unemployed. Thus capitalist farming grew in other countries out of the feudal ages. The price of such growth for Soviet Russia under the world conditions of the modern era would be not only continued class war in rural districts, not only swiftly increasing unemployment, not only the steady submergence of all socialist industry by an expanding capitalism, but the complete dependence of this young Russian capitalism on the financial oligarchs of the imperialist world. Such, at least, was the analysis made by Stalin and the Communist Party in adopting in 1928 the now famous Five-Year Plan.

The Five-Year Plan proposed the rapid industrialization of the country, more rapid than any

[4] *Collected Works*, Russian edition, XXVI, 46.

industrialization known in the world before. Heavy industry must first be built, the machines that make machines for other industry and for farming. Lighter industries to raise the standard of living must rapidly follow. Farming must be industrialized, not by strengthening a class of rural capitalists, but by the voluntary uniting of all non-exploiting peasants, beginning with the poorest, into collective groups farming their lands jointly with machinery which the developing state industry would supply. This was necessary to make farming modern, while giving the benefits of its modernization to all farmers. It was necessary to make Russia socialist, or even to preserve the half-socialism which the city workers had begun. It was necessary for the independence of the country and the very existence of the Soviet government. "We could not refrain," said Stalin, "from whipping up a country which was a hundred years behind and which owing to its backwardness was faced with mortal danger." [5]

In less than five years—for the Five-Year Plan was 96 per cent completed in four and a quarter years from October 1928 through December 1932—Stalin was able to announce that the former backward agricultural Russia had become the sec-

[5] Report to Joint Plenum of Central Committee and Central Control Commission on *Results of Five-Year Plan*, 1933.

ond industrial country in the world. The number employed in industry doubled from eleven million to twenty-two million. The volume of industrial output also doubled, from 15.7 billion rubles in 1928 to 34.3 billion in 1932 (calculated at prices prevailing in 1926-7); it was three times the prewar production. At the same time a rapid industrialization of farming combined some twenty million tiny, uneconomic subsistence farms into 200,000 large collectively operated farms (by 1936 there were 250,000) based on machine power, scientific methods, division of labor. The relative proportion of industrial to agricultural output grew from 48 per cent at the beginning of the plan to 70 per cent at the end of 1932, thus changing Russia from an agricultural to a predominantly industrial country.

"Formerly we did not have an iron and steel industry. Now we have such an industry," reported Stalin in January 1933 at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

"We did not have a tractor industry. Now we have one.

"We did not have an automobile industry. Now we have one.

"We did not have an engineering industry. Now we have one.

"We did not have a big and modern chemical industry. Now we have one.

"We did not have a real solid industry for the production of modern farm machinery. Now we have one.

"We did not have an aviation industry. Now we have one.

"In production of electric power we were last in the list. Now we are among the first in the list. . . .

"And we have achieved these enormous new branches of industry on a scale that makes the scale of European industry pale into insignificance. . . ." Such was only part of the success reported.

The Five-Year Plan cost heavily in dislocation of populations, exhaustion of youth, disorganization of harvests and many privations which attended the rationing of food and other commodities. But never in history was such an advance gained at less cost and certainly never so swiftly; and it was gained unprecedentedly without long-term credits or foreign loans. Had the pace been less swift, had the Communists postponed this breathless drive towards full industrialization, they believe that Soviet Russia would already have had "not pacts of non-aggression, but war." "We would have been unarmed in the midst of a capitalist environment which is armed with modern

technique."[6] The advance of Japan into Manchuria in 1931 and the stated intention of Nazi Germany to expand into Soviet Ukraine are warnings today which anyone may read of the fate which might already have overtaken the Soviet Union but for its swiftly rising economic and military strength.

With the conclusion of the first Five-Year Plan at the end of 1932, the Soviet Union plunged into the second. "We have already laid the foundations of a socialist society . . . and all we have to do now is to erect the edifice—a task which undoubtedly is easier," said Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress in early 1934. Industry and trade were already 99 per cent socialized; three-fourths of agricultural production was socialized. On the base thus established, the second Five-Year Plan proposed to abolish "all private property in the means of production, all class distinctions, all exploitation of man by man."[7] It proposed three times as much new construction as had been achieved in the first Five-Year Plan. It proposed a doubling and tripling of the standard of living through the final technical reconstruction of the whole national economy, the mastery of the most modern methods and the most complex machines.

[6] Stalin, *Results of the First Five-Year Plan.*

[7] Molotov, *Tasks of the Second Five-Year Plan.*

Already as the year 1936 opens, it is clear that the second Five-Year Plan can be accomplished in less than five years. In the last months of 1935 the total monthly output of heavy industry was already five times as high as in 1928.[8] Grain production has known three record harvests surpassing all pre-collectivization years. Rapid increase in the standard of living—more food, better clothing, expanding art and science—is evident in all parts of the country. Cotton pickers, sugar-beet growers, combined-harvester operators, timber workers, machinists and miners are descending triumphantly on Moscow to celebrate their achievements in production and win the plaudits of the land.

With hammer blows the figures of the 1935 achievements were given by Molotov in January 1936 to the Central Executive Committee. A 20.4 per cent increase in industrial production over 1934, in place of the 16 per cent planned; 23 per cent increase in freight car loadings, 45 per cent in raw cotton, and 43 per cent in sugar beets. A grain harvest running close to one hundred million tons, nearly ten million above the highest previous harvest; horses up 5 per cent, cattle 18 per cent, sheep and goats 25 per cent, hogs 38 per cent—all increases of a single year.

[8] From 404.9 million rubles, average monthly output in 1928 to 2,180.6 million in Nov. 1935, stable rubles of 1926-7.

The abolition of the card system of rationing, reported Grinko, Commissar of Finance, had lifted the trade turnover from 60 to 80 billion rubles; the profits from socialist economy were 7.8 billion rubles; the planned state budget receipts had been exceeded and the planned expenditures cut, leaving a surplus for expansion. But the most important result of the year, said Molotov, was the Stakhanov movement "which leads to an entire revolution in industry and transport, and opens the first page of the great advance in socialist productivity of labor."

Then, with confidence born of experience, Valery Meshlauk, head of the State Planning Commission, gave page after page of the carefully plotted future. "The 1936 plan provides for a further and accelerated upsurge of the whole national economy." The increase set for large-scale industry is 23 per cent, a 15 billion ruble advance, which is greater than the entire output of this industry in 1927. The increase set for agriculture is 24 per cent, for commodity circulation 25, railway transport 19.8, capital construction 34.8. The financial income of the population is to rise from 101 to 118 billion rubles, in the face of steadily dropping prices. Social and cultural services in the central and local budgets are to rise from 16 to 21 billion, the social insurance alone from 6.7 to

8 billion. But darkly across this shining future run figures of army expansion, from the 6.5 billion planned to 8.2 billion actually spent in 1935 and 14.8 billion planned for 1936. For beyond the borders of the triumphantly planned growth of Soviet national economy lie the unpredictable dangers of the chaotic capitalist world.

If a map of the Soviet world could be drawn pictorially and changed with each changing year, it would show countless new cities arising on formerly barren land. It would show tens of millions of tiny, uneconomic farm plots merging into a rhythm of horizon-touching fields. It would show thousands of geological expeditions penetrating uncharted wildernesses to discover and chart nationally owned wealth. Following these there would flash across the scene surveyors, engineers, new railroads, steel plants, textile mills. New timber areas open, new coal and oil fields. If the map had a sound film attachment one would hear the summons sent forth to young Communists, to workers in the older, better-organized factories, demanding heroic personnel for the conquest of the wastes. The conquering march of man reaches northward to settle the Arctic and eastward to the wild coasts opposite Alaska. And a long green strip of a million and a half acres of new forest-zone moves steadily southward across treeless

plains of Kazakstan as a mighty screen to protect the grain lands of South Russia from the desert winds of Asia.

For the past two years the Communist leaders have begun to speak of socialism as "victorious"; its economic base is secure.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

"The Soviet Union needs no foreign wars for transforming the world."

MANUILSKI at Congress of Communist International, 1935.

A socialist country craves peace for development. As the life of the Soviet people grows richer and more varied, the one great dread which hangs above it is the threat of war. Soviet citizens are never subject to the illusion—most diabolical of all the contradictions of capitalism—that war may bring a feverish, blood-bought prosperity and eliminate unemployment by turning men into the pursuits of destruction. The prosperity of socialism is based on harmonious correlation of production and needs, and there is no unemployment. The Soviet world sees war as naked destruction of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Even the need of preparing for war it sees as a waste of resources which might otherwise go in direct benefits to the population.

In the eighteen years of its existence, the Soviet Union has been widely recognized as a champion

of peace. Even its foes admit that the USSR does not want war for the present. Yet so confused is the world's thinking on the subject of war and peace—a confusion promoted by diplomats and statesmen—so instinctive under capitalism has become the assumption that every advancing nation must seek in the end the test of war, that the Soviet hunger for peace is at times confused either with cowardice or hypocrisy. Are they not perhaps just watchfully waiting until their economic building is accomplished, and their strength is sure? What are they doing in the League of Nations? Why are they increasing the Red Army? Do they not after all want world revolution, which world war presumably might usher in? How permanent is the Soviet wish for peace? And, even if sincere, can it be effective?

There are two ways to approach this question: by the detailed examination of Soviet history and by understanding the theory behind every Soviet action. We shall take each of these methods in turn.

Behind all Soviet action is the Marxian theory that the cause of war is neither permanent in human nature, as militarists claim, nor to be found in lack of goodwill and in the character of rulers, as idealist pacifists think. Marxists hold that war arises from class conflicts. Wars in the present period

of world history, according to this analysis, arise from the struggle of capitalism to survive and grow by investment in new markets. This leads the major nations to engage first in small wars of colonial oppression, the forcing of their goods and investment upon undeveloped peoples; these lead to wars between the imperialist nations over the territories which both sides wish to exploit. A socialist commonwealth where the people own jointly their means of production and receive all the fruits of their toil, wants no expanding market for surplus profits but only equal interchange of goods which encourages peace.

A socialist world would thus attain peace permanently. But a single socialist country lives in a world of foes. Can peace be attained under these conditions? Not permanently and not with assurance, as long as capitalism survives. The capitalist world system from its nature breeds war. None the less, each specific war has specific causes, which may be studied, analyzed, hampered and delayed. Peace may be won from month to month and year to year by specific, well-considered actions, as an able engineer postpones collapse inherent in a faulty structure by accurate balancing of specific strains and stresses. This is an unstable peace, but better than none, for every curtailment of war prevents human suffering.

In applying this analysis to our present period of history, Soviet policy holds that the economic world today is one and indivisible, and that every war must affect the whole world. No fair words of politicians can keep a nation out of it; no policy of isolation can be a guarantee. For behind all those words and beneath all such policies the economic pressures inexorably act. Trade in goods of war begins to flow towards even a minor conflict and steadily the traders are drawn further in. Thus was America drawn into the World War by increasing financial commitments, till at last an American ambassador cabled from London that a panic would shake the whole United States unless American boys followed American dollars into the battles of Britain and France. When that stage occurs, no country keeps out of it; the president who "kept us out of war" turns about and marches in.

Even those nations which are technically neutral —the number of these decreases with the seriousness of the war—are involved only slightly less than those who battle. "Any war," says Litvinoff, "sooner or later, will bring distress to all countries, both to the combatants and the non-participants. We must never forget the lesson of the World War, the consequences of which are felt to this day by combatants and neutral countries alike.

The impoverishment of the whole world, the lowering of the living standards of all categories of labor, both physical and mental, unemployment when no one is sure of tomorrow, to say nothing of the collapse of cultural values, the reversion of certain countries to medieval ideas—these are the consequences of the World War which are clearly felt sixteen years after its end."

To maintain peace is therefore a permanent policy for the Soviet Union. To maintain peace not only for itself but in the world. But peace is not to be had by expecting it. It may not even be won by refusing to fight. China refuses to fight, but gets no peace. Neither preparedness nor unpreparedness is a safeguard; unarmed and well-armed folk have alike gone to war. The only safeguard for even that partial peace possible under capitalism is clear, sincere study of the whole world situation, the choosing of a policy which prevents war or lessens it, and the backing of that policy by all available power. One must struggle for peace; it will not come otherwise. The methods change as the situations change.

For eighteen years the Soviet Union has made this struggle. "Peace, land and bread" was the slogan of the October Revolution. The hunger for peace of a war-exhausted people brought the Bolsheviks to power. Their first official act on

November 8, 1917, was to propose "to all warring peoples and their governments to begin immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace." As an attack upon the war and to remove causes of future war, the new revolutionary government exposed and denounced the secret treaties by which England, France and Russia had agreed to redivide the world. They annulled oppressive tsarist treaties which had been enforced on Persia and Turkey, and withdrew the Russian army from Persia.

The strength of the new government was not equal to its understanding. The Entente Powers—England, France and the United States—denounced the Bolsheviks for daring to speak of peace and left their former ally to the mercy of Germany. The German general staff marched onward into a prostrate country offering the Bolsheviks "robber terms." The position of the Soviet state was further weakened by Trotsky's attempt to deal with advancing troops by clever phrases. He refused to sign terms but protested in the formula: "Neither war nor peace"—an appeal to the conscience of the German people. But general staffs are not expected to have a conscience, and no Germans acted to save the Russians. The invading army marched far into the Ukraine and took possession, giving in the end worse terms than those

originally offered. Trotsky's appeal reached the consciences of idealists; I recall that it thrilled me far out in Seattle. But it was Ukrainian peasants and workers who suffered; idealist gestures are dangerous tactics in war.

If Germany offered the Bolsheviks only a robbers' peace, their former allies gave them no peace at all. On April 5, 1918, the Japanese landed in Vladivostok; following them the English, French and American armies invaded Siberia. Allied armies landed on the Arctic coast to seize the northern part of Russia; the British grabbed Baku, oil capital of the south. Agents of the Entente incited and participated in armed uprisings of Czechoslovak prisoners of war along the Volga, leading them against the Bolshevik government. From east and west and north and south the armies of all the major capitalist powers surrounded the Revolution with an iron ring of war and blockade.

Across this iron ring the starving people of the new state sent appeal after appeal to all those governments which refused to deal with them but especially to President Wilson. Beginning on November 24, 1918, and repeating their query through Raymond Robins, head of the American Red Cross in Russia, and also by direct cables to the State Department, they offered to consider any peace terms whatever: recognition of debts, con-

cessions of territory, control of mines and natural resources. Rather than deal in any way with Bolsheviks, Wilson and the Allied governments sitting in Versailles issued a call to all the "organized groups in Russia" to meet at the Principo Islands, a proposal which clearly presaged the dividing of Russia into spheres of influence after the style of China. The Bolsheviks were not invited, but they accepted; the other governments refused and the scheme fell through. There followed the famous trip of William Christian Bullitt to Moscow in March 1919 as President Wilson's semi-official representative. The hard-pressed Soviet government was ready to agree to Bullitt's proposal that it accept all financial obligations of all past Russian governments, and divide the territory of Russia among all those governments which should be in armed possession when the treaty should be signed. But the treaty was never signed; President Wilson refused to receive the report of his own envoy. Bolsheviks were made to realize that no peace can be had from the imperialist powers of earth by any backward nation. Not even the price of slavish submission buys peace for China; nor could the offer of territory and gold buy it for Russia.

Not by appeals for peace and not by offers of concessions, but by the desperate struggle and

courage of the Revolutionary Red Army was peace and independence finally won. It was secured in slow stages, first cessation of battle, then trade agreements, then, much more slowly, diplomatic recognition. At each stage the strength of the new state was again and again probed and tested by a capitalist world unwilling to yield it the right to exist. Under such conditions the Soviet government stabilized its borders by granting swift recognition to the new Baltic States. Then, in the first international conference to which it was admitted, in April 1922 in Genoa, the Soviet delegate proposed a plan for strengthening general peace in Europe.

"The forces directed towards restoration of world economy will be strangled as long as above Europe and above the world hangs the threat of new wars," said Chicherin. "The Russian delegation intends to propose a general limitation of armaments and to support any proposition which has the aim of lightening the burdens of militarism." The Soviet representatives again agreed to recognize debts of past Russian governments but now demanded in return the right to compensation for the destruction caused to Russia by unprovoked intervention. Failing to get response to either proposal, Soviet Russia signed with Germany the famous Rapallo agreement, whereby

both nations canceled the debts of the other and renewed relations on the basis of equality. This was the first gesture made by any nation to cure the wounds of the World War and to deal with vanquished Germany on a basis which set foundations for peace. Had the other nations followed this example the bitter history of Europe of the past thirteen years might have been different.

After the Genoa Conference, the Soviet struggle for peace was marked by slow but steady establishment of diplomatic relations with the major powers of the world. This in itself was an element of stability in Europe, but normal relations were still much shaken by frequent raids on Soviet embassies and consulates in many countries, conducted on shallow pretexts and accompanied by forged letters and provocatory accusations unprecedented in diplomatic history.[1] Similar attacks on nations in the past have counted as causes of war. The Soviet Union responded to these attacks by steadily widening its pacts of non-aggression with

[1] Such as the assassination of Vorovsky during the Lausanne conference, which coincided with an ultimatum from the British Foreign Office; the raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking, April 1927, followed by the execution of many of its Chinese staff; the raid on the Soviet trading agency in London May 12, 1927; the forged "Zinoviev letter" which swayed a British election. These were only the most spectacular of a whole series of raids, attacks and attempted assassinations which made being a Soviet ambassador a hazardous occupation.

minor or hard-pressed nations—Turkey first in December 1925, followed by Germany, Lithuania, Persia, Latvia, Afghanistan and others. Unlike all previous alliances and ententes, these pacts were non-exclusive. They were offered to all nations.

When the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament of the League of Nations held its fourth session on November 30, 1927, the newly invited Soviet delegation startled the world by proposing to disarm. Five years earlier Chicherin had made a similar proposition at Genoa; it went unnoticed and was soon forgotten. But Litvinoff's statement in 1927 came from a nation which had proved its economic and political stability over a term of years. It came moreover at a time when the peoples of the world were beginning to be disillusioned by the ever-repeated fruitless conferences with which European governments sought to hide from their peoples the chaos which followed the World War.

Litvinoff broke the polite façade by suggesting actual disarmament, stating that the Soviet Government was ready to agree to total disarmament or any percentage of disarmament which the other powers would accept. He made this challenge time after time in the sight of the peoples of the world, until the constant evasion of the militarists made it apparent that no capitalist power was will-

ing even to reduce armaments, and that the Disarmament Conference itself was little more than a mask for the old rearmament race.

As armaments grew, the Soviet Union steadily extended pacts of non-aggression and began to press for an internationally accepted "definition of the aggressor," designed to mobilize world opinion against the provokers of war. None of the major imperialist powers was willing to accept Litvinoff's definition, which denounced as aggression the sending of any armed forces into any other nation. A dozen or more of the smaller countries signed it; the Soviet Union began to win the post of champion of the rights of smaller powers, which it was later to expand by its participation in the League of Nations.

The will to peace of the Soviet Union and its intelligence in maneuvering to keep out of war was soon severely tested by the growing tensions in the Far East. Japan's invasion of Manchuria has been recognized by the whole world as a violation of the League of Nations Covenant, the Washington Nine-Power Pact and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, to all of which Japan was signatory. It carried her troops to the Soviet borders and occasionally across them in forays by armed patrols which killed Soviet border guards and peasants. The most serious source of contention was the possession by the

Soviet Government of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which crosses Manchuria as the shortest route to Vladivostok. Attacks by alleged bandits and arrests by Japanese military authorities put Soviet railway employees in peril hardly less than that of war. A report by the Soviet director of the road related over 3,000 cases of armed attack which had resulted in the murder of 56 people, the wounding of 825, the destruction of four kilometers of main line track and of hundreds of passenger and freight cars. On October 9, 1933, the USSR was able to publish four Japanese secret documents which discussed the "great necessity for assimilating the railway," and made it plain that most of the attacks were inspired by Japanese military forces.

The answer of the USSR to these provocations was neither that of the strong capitalist nation which would long since have "protected its interests and citizens" by declaring war, nor was it that of a defenseless colonial nation like China, which continually submits. The Soviet Union built strong fortifications on its entire Far Eastern border, obviously of a defensive nature; and simultaneously removed a source of conflict by selling the railroad to Manchukuo at a price hardly one-fifth of the sum originally invested by the Russians. I was present in Tokyo when the sale occurred and noted the lessening of tension. "The Japa-

nese people are for the time being convinced of our peaceful purposes; it will be some months before their militarists will be able to inflame them against us," said a Soviet diplomat to me, making the distinction which Communists always make between people and governments. The Japanese militarists were even then laying a basis for further provocation by suggesting the purchase of Soviet Saghalin. Yet for even a temporary lessening of tension, the USSR thought it worth while to make concessions.

In September 1934 the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations, an act which startled both friend and foe. Yet it was the logical consequence of the changing conditions of Europe and the growing strength of the USSR. The Soviet Union views the League analytically rather than emotionally. What is it? What has it to give? The League is not a territory nor a state nor a super-power; still less is it an ideal or a formula which will somehow miraculously bring peace. The League is a diplomatic instrument through which a group of powers meet and come to an agreement. Its policy is decided by the powers that are in it and by the relative strength and courage of those powers.

Behind the idealistic phrases with which at different stages each participating power has veiled

its use of the League, the purpose of the League changes. Wilson started it as the organization of Europe on a basis of nationality; his plan involved also "freedom of the seas." But "freedom of the seas" meant to Britain the domination of the world by American gold instead of by the British fleet; and Europe on a basis of nationality appalled Clemenceau, who knew quite well that there are twice as many Germans as French in Europe, and that "the interests of France" demand the splitting up of the Germans into minorities among many nations. The League, with America out, became the arena where Britain and France struggled for control of Europe, France wishing to crush Germany utterly and Britain willing to help Germany expand slightly as a balance against France. Wall Street helped Britain by the Dawes and Young plans of reparations, scaling them down to "Germany's capacity to pay," i.e., the amount which it was thought German capitalists could squeeze from industrious German workers for several generations without revolt. Germany came into the League, hailed by phrases on the "United States of Europe," which meant to the Soviet Union the united attempt of world capitalism to placate Germany for the Versailles deprivations by financing her in a drive to the East.

But Dawes guessed wrong. The world eco-

nomic crisis broke Germany's "capacity to pay" and ability to wait. Japan and Germany both left the League to seek expansion by their own armed might. The war danger increased but the League itself became, by their disaffection, an organization of powers which had more to lose than to gain from immediate war. "The League might become a hindrance to warlike tendencies," said Stalin. It still contained robber powers who exploited colonial peoples, and small unstable states built up on the loot of Versailles. The Soviet Union admits the justice of the German grievance, but never the right of war to enforce those claims. "Injustices perpetrated by one war," said Litvinoff, "can never be rectified by a new one, which only perpetrates worse injustices." The Soviet Union entered the League to strengthen it against the tendency of Germany, Japan and now Italy to throw a torch into the powder magazine of the world. She thus upholds territorial gains of robber nations in order to increase the chances of world peace.

She even goes further. By pacts of mutual assistance concluded with France and Czechoslovakia, she has placed the might of her increasing Red Army behind the status quo of Europe. She joins with these "robber powers" to blockade Italy, herself the first to agree to the sanctions. Yet when oil sanctions are not agreed to, she continues

to sell this commodity to Italy,[2] bewildering the idealists of many nations. Why? Because no high example can check Italians in Abyssinia or stop the spread of the war infection through the trade channels of the world. Because idealist gestures are dangerous tactics against general staffs of armies: that lesson was learned at Brest-Litovsk. Because isolated action might turn against the Soviet Union a fascist drive from a disintegrating Europe, helped to disintegration by her choice of an individual stand. Only the threat of might may possibly halt the explosive drive towards war of a desperate fascism—the might of Europe organized through the League. The Soviet Union throws herself into the task of organizing it[3] through security pacts which she seeks to widen. For the status quo is evil, but war is worse.

To strengthen this might the Soviet Union increases her Red Army, the only armed force on which she can really depend. Britain and France are camps of conflicting interests; on this the Communists have no illusions. In both these countries

[2] In steadily decreasing amounts, in spite of American headlines to the contrary. It is America's sales that increase.

[3] She tried first to organize an "Eastern Locarno," a pact of many nations against anyone who started an aggression. It failed through the refusal of Poland and Germany. Soviet policy is still to expand security pacts to all possible nations, including Germany and Poland, not even the present pacts being exclusive in nature.

are strong popular forces supporting the USSR and the League of Nations in the policy of collective security against aggressors, and other strong reactionary forces which would prefer to support Nazi Germany in the looting of Russia. This would launch world war with all the gigantic means of modern destruction. Hence the struggle against world war today becomes inextricably linked with the struggle against fascist tendencies in the major imperialist countries.

This war, if it comes, will be no mere war between nations. It will arouse class conflicts throughout the world. Not at first perhaps, but in the end in every country. This the Red Army understands thoroughly; its loyalty is not alone to Russia but to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, wherever they exist or come into being. But not unless invaded will the Soviet Union intervene in any other country, either by war or by interference in its affairs. Marxian analysis tells them that this would hamper the revolutionary development of the other country; it would turn workers towards the capitalists of their own country under the name of patriotism. If the world war starts, the Red Army will advance with a rifle in one hand and pamphlets in the other. It has shells to distribute tens of thousands of leaflets calling on the brotherhood of all workers; it has also the means

of effective war. As the world's most politically conscious, most mechanized army, trained in many languages, it is able to lead and equip partisan war on the territory of foes. It is told to get results with a minimum of suffering.

I well remember a talk in Moscow with a high Soviet authority on the subject of Japan in the tense winter of 1933. It was clear to us both that the Soviet air fleet was superior and in easy reach of Tokyo. We looked from high windows on the ice in Moscow river and discussed the chances of war.

"A good, industrious folk, the Japanese," he said slowly. "It would be a pity to bomb them. Do you think any Communist likes to set aflame whole towns of toiling folk? . . . If war should come in the East between us and Japan, we have not the slightest doubt that it would be the end of capitalist Japan. Revolution would start in Manchukuo and spread southward through China, till all Asia was Communist. Every imperialist power in the world would fight this, till at last revolt flamed up in their own lands. The world revolution might thus be accomplished, but the world that survived would be badly ruined. It would cost the lives of tens of millions of toiling folk; it would mean famine and pestilence sweeping all Asia. The world revolution will be secured with

much less suffering, if peace can be maintained."

"The Soviet Union needs no foreign wars for transforming the world," said Manuilski in 1935 at the Congress of the Communist International. Her struggle for peace is no temporary slogan. With every year of peace the Soviet Union strengthens, not only as a nation, but as a shining example which the world will follow. As socialism advances in the Soviet Union, it begins to attract scientists, engineers, artists; it draws away from allegiance to capitalism wider and wider hosts. With every year of peace—granted the steadily advancing Soviet Union—the international relation of world forces shifts to the side of the Soviet world and to the disadvantage of capitalism.

Capitalism breeds war, yet world war is not inevitable. For capitalism itself is no longer inevitable in the world. If the struggle for peace can avail month by month and year by year, to check, delay and hamper the forces that drive towards war, capitalism itself may collapse in one war-inciting country after another on a sufficient scale to prevent world war altogether. Or world war, if it comes, may be greatly shortened by the revolt of all those people who suffer unbearably from war.

This is the hope behind the Soviet struggle for peace. But whether in peace or in war, the growing strength and prosperity of the Soviet Union,

achieved through two Five-Year Plans, insures the direction and is the pledge of the whole world's future. The only question now is how deep and bitter will be the struggle—even the wars—before the far-flung peoples know and copy. But nothing any longer can stop the advance of their world-wide forces. They have both strength and knowledge and a conscience about the world.

PART II

THE SOVIET WORLD MAKES MEN

CHAPTER IX

THE FACTORY COLLECTIVE

In all the recent congresses in Moscow, when miners, auto-workers, weavers, engineers and lathe-hands come up to celebrate their latest achievements in production and to receive honors for increasing a nation's wealth, a phrase recurs which has no counterpart under capitalism, because the reality which it expresses could not exist there. Even in the Soviet Union the widening use of the phrase is recent, an instinctive expression of a new and growing reality.

"I bring you greetings from our factory collective." "Our factory collective pledges its full support."

The factory collective is not the plant administration. Nor is it the trade union, the shop committee or even the Party organization of the factory. All these organizations are a part of it, having their well-defined functions in its vivid life. The factory collective is the sum total of all the people in the plant in all their organized functions, the basic living cell of Soviet society.

The concept of the factory collective did not

spring into being full grown. It derives steadily from the joint ownership of the means of production which has now existed for eighteen years. This is the economic reality which is steadily determining the minds of men and the forms of their social life. A worker attached to a machine must be either its slave or its owner; under capitalism he is its slave. In the Soviet Union he knows himself owner of the machine but not the sole owner. It is entrusted to him to master, to get from it all that modern technical skill can give. The product belongs to him and his fellows; through his work in the plant he connects with all society. This gives back to man the old unity of life around the process of production which was riven in twain when the tools by which men created passed into alien hands. It returns on a wider scale and at a higher level by as much as the modern machine is more powerful than the ancient tool.

An American who had worked for some years in a Soviet factory told me that two things especially impressed him: the relation of workers to administration and the cultural life around the factory. "The foreman always asks the workers' advice in all problems; the relations are those of two friends instead of a boss. In America my factory was just a place to make a living, just another day

to get through as soon as you could. Here it is your club, your center of culture, the thing that is closest in life."

The life of the factory collective has three main aspects: production, workers' life, and relation to the rest of the country. Each of these aspects has its own control. The director and his assistants are responsible for organizing production. The trade union is responsible for organizing the workers' life, including factory conditions, insurance, education and social activities. The Party organization is responsible for the political training of the workers, for widening their knowledge of the country's policies and of their plant's function in the building of socialism.

These three together—director, trade union organizer, and Party secretary—form the "triangle," the highest authority in the plant. Each has his clearly defined function; all three together consult on questions affecting the fundamental life of the factory. Orders of the director must be taken without question in production, and he is held responsible for everything that happens in the plant. But any director who failed to get on with the Party and trade union organization wouldn't last long. As a Russian worker explained it: "If the factory collective doesn't like the director,

you may be sure the Commissariat of Heavy Industry won't leave him there." [1]

The relation between workers and management was thus described to me by the American worker: "The whole working gang is interested in production. The program for next month is discussed with all of us. The foreman calls a meeting and tells us that the administration wants us to put out 3,000 milling tools next month. How shall we do it? We discuss in detail; each of us says what he can do. It all adds up to 4,000. So the foreman goes to the administration and raises the plan to 4,000. If we fulfill or surpass our plan, we get a premium which we divide among the workers on the basis of what each has done. To help us estimate this, the shop economist gives us each month a list of each worker's production, spoilage, idle time, breakdown of machines. Naturally we give the most of the premium to the best workers because they helped the whole gang win. The factory honors the winning brigade not only with a premium but with a red banner which waves each month among the lathes for everyone who passes to see. The best factories get honor and premiums from the whole country because everyone knows that the more we produce the more everyone will have."

[1] See Chap. 6 for an example of this.

When conflicts occur in a factory between the management and the trade union, there are various ways in which they may be resolved. Often the Party organization of the plant can settle it by discussion within this wider group to which members both of administration and trade union belong. Serious disagreements are appealed by the shop committee to its central trade union, or even to the All-Union Council of Trade Unions which has governmental powers to enforce the rights of workers. For individual cases of injustice appeal is often made direct to the courts. These struggles may be time-consuming, but men who feel convinced enough of their case to fight it through rarely fail of satisfaction. The head of the Nijni Auto Works was removed in 1932 after an investigation by the trade unions which began with a fight over living conditions started by the foreign workers. In another case that I know, an engineer who sharply criticized the plant's manager in the factory newspaper was later fired on grounds that he thought insufficient. Failing to interest the shop committee in his case he took it to the city organization of the Party, which ordered an investigation that resulted in his reinstatement, with wages paid for all time lost. The director was reprimanded, and the reprimand printed on the front page of the factory newspaper, in order, as

one worker expressed it, that "the director may know he is not God."

More common are the conflicts in which local management and trade union unite to compel action by the central offices of the trust. The shop committee demands certain safety appliances or new construction for the health of the workers. The manager replies that his budget does not allow it. He has no objection, however, to the shop committee making the strongest possible case through the trade union to the central organization which supplies the budget. Since the manager has no personal profit to make by cutting out improvements, but advances in reputation and position rather through his ability to maintain an enthusiastic organization of productive workers, his interest lies on the side of supplying their demands.

Workers, on the other hand, do not want a boss who is soft and sentimental. They want one who can efficiently organize their work. They know that their prosperity depends directly on the success of their factory. They themselves will ask to have workers transferred who make much spoilage, or even expelled if they steal or persistently disorganize production. They consider it desertion for a worker to shift jobs without reason or without training someone to take his place. If health or family matters require a

change, or if a factory cannot use his highest skill or give him a chance to develop, he applies for and gets "release." But to shift merely because another factory, better organized, can give him higher wages and better conditions is considered cowardly.

"Somebody has to make this factory a good one. Why shouldn't he? His going makes it that much harder for the rest of us; we have to break in a green man. Why should he run off to another place that other folks organized because he finds things difficult here?" Here is an attitude similar to that of partners in a business.

Production, however, is only part of existence. Around this center of jointly owned production is built the whole unity of the worker's life. Through his factory collective he enters into the duties and privileges of citizenship; it is the primary organization which elects deputies to the local Soviets. Through his shop committee he receives his social insurance, his opportunities for education, his excursions, sports and vacations, and takes part in a score of voluntary social activities from government commissions to parachute clubs.

Let us take an example of the internal organization of a factory collective, the Red Proletarian Plant in Moscow. The smallest unit in the plant is the production brigade which may have thirty

to fifty workers. There are one hundred and fifty brigades in the plant, under one shop committee. These brigades not only compete in production records, rewarded by red banners and premiums, but also in social activity. Homiakov's brigade, for instance, has twenty-nine workers. Every one of them does some social work. Some check the norms of production and standards of piece-work; some watch over the social insurance; three edit the wall newspaper which criticizes the shortcomings of the plant and of the workers. One middle-aged man was inactive socially and this was a great shame to the group, which tried to locate some tasks to interest him. They finally elected him president of the Red Aid Branch; within a month he signed up a big membership and had an active circle going.

The brigade decides the list of "udarniks," champion workers who get special privileges; but its list will be further checked by the trade union if it is too large or if there are complaints. Does a worker need a free vacation at a sanatorium? The brigade discusses it and sends a recommendation to the shop committee, which has a definite quota of places, and can fight for more. Safety devices on machinery, raising the technical knowledge of each operator, financial help to workers who are in straits, are matters which start with the

brigade and are sent with their recommendation to the trade union. The union itself as a whole is actively pushing the completion of the new model dining-room, the expansion of the day nursery and clinic facilities—all these on demands which originally start in the brigades. All this work is democratically initiated, organized, carried through and checked by the rank and file members.

Not the least important aspect of factory life is the cultural activity. Educational opportunities range from simple classes in reading and writing for newly arrived peasants, which characterized the earlier years of Soviet power, to the present university courses and institutions of scientific research. "You come to your factory to study, to attend a university," said a worker to me. "You think, 'My factory is going to make an engineer of me.' After work you take a hot shower and go to the library or gliding club. Artists and singers come from the theaters to sing for us during the dinner hour. Famous authors come to discuss their books with us. If you want to write or act, you join the dramatic club or literary circle. Maybe some day you may go away to enter a theater or a newspaper, but even then you will sometimes come back to your factory."

The intimate sense of possession which a Soviet worker feels in his factory was strikingly shown

to me by my step-daughter Ducia, who worked in a large electric plant near Moscow. I accompanied her on her return to the factory after she had been ill at home with grippe. As we approached the plant she grew excited; a vividness came into her gestures which had been lacking during her two weeks at home. She insisted that I notice and admire the factory laboratory where she worked, the power plant, the restaurant, the big workers' club building; she pointed out the pathway between the shops that led to the park and stadium. I suddenly realized that Ducia had been positively homesick for her factory.

Her reason for having chosen this particular factory to work in had little to do with wages. She chose it because it had a good reputation as an educational and social center, with a strong organization of Communist youth and a first class university. This offered her the well-rounded life which she demanded from her labor. Her working day was only six hours long, but she not infrequently spent twelve hours or more in and around the factory. She would go half an hour before her work began, drop into the Red Corner to get her newspaper or to discuss with the other girls the work of the political courses; she would come home late in the evening after her skiing

club, German class or musical circle, or perhaps still later from a group party at the theater.

In Ducia's set it is the accepted view, which she does not even stop to formulate, that every human being should engage in three kinds of serious activity: productive work whereby he justifies his right to a share in the commonly produced goods of the country; voluntary social work, which holds together the whole apparatus of society; and study which improves individual capacities. Besides this serious activity there are recreations. All this many-sided life Ducia finds in her factory.

The study takes different forms from year to year. In addition to courses in physics, German and political science which she takes regularly, various campaigns urge special study upon her. It may be her Young Communist League which makes a drive to have all members study the history of the Communist movement of youth. One year it was the drive for "technical minimum," to raise the skill of all workers in the country. Ducia's technical minimum was fixed for her by a committee of engineers who visited her laboratory, and discussed with each employee separately the special subjects needed for his work. She studied these subjects for several months, assisted by a voluntary teacher, one of the engineers of the plant who agreed to help several girls as his form of

social work. "The whole laboratory is like a university," said Ducia, "with the six hours' work like practice on our subjects. When girls meet on the stairs, they are always asking whether you have finished such a formula."

Like most of her associates, Ducia also does social work; in her case it is the organization of the twelve current-events' courses for young people in the various shops of the factory. She takes much pride in keeping these running well. Not all social work is as serious as Ducia's. One of the girls organizes a group for parachute jumping, another gets up theater parties, a third helps to plan excursions. Social work is not something that an individual does "for others"; it is the extension of his own interests, the organization in a social manner of what he himself most likes to do. It is also of value to the community and a direct preparation for participation in government. In a sense it is already taking part in government, which is increasingly built up from these voluntary social activities. A man whose financial ability is shown as dues collector for his union, may rise to full or part-time work as assistant chief of the city taxes. A woman who shows interest and efficiency in organizing the factory day nursery may later become chief of the city's motherhood and infancy bureau.

This is in fact the normal path to political office in the Soviet Union. I recall, for instance, Gribkova, who ten years ago was a young, illiterate farm servant. Wishing to better herself, she got a job as longshoreman on the Volga, thus entering the public services where, as she put it, "the road lay open to all life." Working downstream she reached a textile mill and took employment as unskilled worker. Here she found the natural center for education and advancement. She learned to read and write, took technical courses and began to handle a machine, took political courses and became an "active one" in her factory. From this point her specialization was possible in two directions: through technical training to higher posts in industry, or through social work and political training to posts in government. Gribkova chose the latter; she became interested in the voluntary tasks of factory inspection, and was later chosen by her fellow workers as part of their quota for a two-year training course which prepared professional factory inspectors. She is now a full-time official, head of inspection for a township. Hundreds of thousands have followed a similar path; this is the typical relation between factory life and the public activities of the country.

The life of a great factory is continuous. Just as its productive life goes on for three shifts, so its

social life continues nearly twenty-four hours a day. If one chances to come at six-thirty in the morning to the great Stalin Auto Works in Moscow, he may see in Day Nursery No. 41 the beginning of the day's life. Mothers bring their children to the nursery before reporting to work. Each child receives a swift medical examination as he enters; if this indicates illness, the mother is excused from work to care for her child or to take it to the hospital. In the case of nurslings, the mother is given an hour off at the end of every three hours' work to nurse her child. These day nurseries are considered as essential a public service as public schools of other countries. But whereas education is compulsory, day nurseries are not. The picture spread abroad of a stern Soviet government forcibly taking children from their mothers would arouse incredulous laughter in any Soviet home. The Soviet mother regards a day nursery as a facility which relieves her of the child certain hours of the day, and as a center of scientific information, whose employees can assist her in its proper care. She demands the day nursery and fights for its quality. If any factory administration fails to supply adequate funds to enlarge and improve its day nursery, the working women will see that the director is reminded.

About the time that the mothers are saying

good-by to their children in the nursery, the newspaper office inside the plant begins to bustle with activity. Six thousand copies of Moscow daily papers and 8,500 copies of the four-page daily of the plant, *Overtake and Surpass*, must be delivered by eight or nine o'clock to subscribers in various shops. The plant newspaper is full of the daily life of the 35,000 workers. It organizes campaigns for production, for quality, for good housing, cooperative stores, clubs, schools, day nurseries; it contains complaints by workers about all these facilities; it is the organ through which these thousands of workers communicate with each other.

In the midst of the great shops of the auto works, a small green square contains both the central dining room and the central polyclinic. The latter is maintained by the Moscow Board of Health, but its connection with the factory collective is very intimate. The health record of every worker is kept on file in a smaller dispensary in the shop where a doctor, medical assistant and statistician are constantly on hand for first aid and general care of this particular group of workers. For all special services the worker goes to the central polyclinic where a medical personnel of 300 includes specialists in all diseases. One interesting feature of this polyclinic is its direct connection with the diet kitchen of the factory which immediately gives the

workers without extra charge the particular diet which the doctor prescribes.

It is no sentimental glorification of manual labor which causes the grouping of Soviet institutions around the factory. It derives naturally from the unity of man as owner, creator and user, which under socialism replaces the capitalist division of men into bosses, hands, and buyers of goods. Even under capitalism men feel a deep human joy in creation and mastery, a mastery which may be widened and deepened by the machine. But capitalism poisons this joy at its source. A crane man in Seattle once told me that when he sat aloft picking up great loads with power and deftness, he felt "like one of those Greek giants or ancient gods." Then he suddenly realized that he had no claim to that crane, but might face any morning, at the owner's whim, the sign: "Closed down," and he felt himself degraded from a god to a slave.

Under capitalism the association of men in production is made hateful by a clash of interests; they seek their real life elsewhere, building it from disjointed fragments. Under socialism this association is strengthened by a thousand ties of mutual interest and becomes the solid foundation on which the whole structure of political and social life is frankly and realistically built. Life becomes unified; from worker to manager, to scientist, to artist

there is at no point a break. A worker studies and becomes an engineer; he is active in the factory committee on inventions, and becomes a scientist; he shows talent in the dramatic circle and becomes an actor; he devotes himself to social work and rises in the government. Any of these interests may become professional and take him out of the factory into a wider or more specialized life. But the factory remains the social home from which he launched into life, and to which he often returns, either actually or emotionally.

CHAPTER X

FARMING A CONTINENT

Among the many flaming words which poured from the hearts of two hundred combined-harvester operators meeting in December 1935 in Moscow with the heads of Party and government, amid jubilation over present success and promises to make the future even more victorious, there was one poignant phrase of contrast with the past.

"We sons and daughters of peasants—had there been no Soviet power, no Party of Lenin-Stalin, our lot would have been slavery to kulaks, or dawnless poverty in the mire of small peasant farming."

These words illumine with a piercing ray the tremendous changes that have taken place in the Soviet rural districts in a span of years so brief that the past still remains vivid in the minds of men not yet thirty years old. "When I worked as a fourteen-year-old farmhand under the tsar," said the combine operator Kapusta, "I never saw the leaders of the government, never saw even the boss for whom I worked. . . . I never expected from life such happiness, such joy."

Five years ago Kapusta was an unskilled worker. But not Kapusta alone; so were they all. What else but unskilled workers were there on the backward individual farms of peasant Russia, where fifteen years ago the tractor was stoned as a "devil machine?" Even five years ago, who among Russian peasants had ever seen a combined-harvester? Today not only are millions of peasants acquainted by sight with the most modern farm machinery, but hundreds of thousands have mastered its operation and make a more continuous use of it than is possible on the private farms of America, which are too small to utilize profitably this modern machine. The combine is already a machine too good for capitalism. The American average harvesting record per combine is 578 acres, while the Soviet average secured in 1935 was 643. The champion operators who met in Moscow spurned this average. They had made records of a thousand, two thousand and even twenty-five hundred acres for the harvest season, and were swearing a solemn oath to train before next harvest many more operators like themselves.

The time of this great advance has been so short that they can all look back as if to yesterday and recall the days of ignorance and poverty, when they slaved for wealthier farmers or wasted nine-tenths of their labor trudging from strip to strip

of their medieval peasant fields. Today the very word "peasant" is passing from their vocabulary. They speak of themselves as "kolhozniks," members of the collective economy, joint owners and users of the large-scale farm on which they work. They know quite well that if there had been no collectivization of farming, their slavery and darkness would have continued. For if modern machines had come to the Russian soil under capitalist conditions, a minority of successful farmers would have gained the means of production and risen to a brief wealth on the impoverishment of millions—brief until they in turn were robbed by the big banks of the cities, as farmers are under capitalism.

The years 1930 to 1933 will go down in mankind's story as the turning point in the farm history of the world. No other events of those years will be so long remembered—not the struggles of the League of Nations, nor the American New Deal; not even the world-wide economic crisis which was but one more, the worst, of many crises. Even the rise of the Chinese Soviets and the turning of Central Europe to fascism may receive less space in future history books than the collectivization of Soviet farming, whereby men won the dream of centuries, security on the soil.

Security on the soil! Security from drought, from floods, from mortgages, from the chances of

nature and the exploitations of man! Even to attain fragments of such security, if not for themselves then for their children, men of all ages have struggled and died. American families left the comforts of settled regions to homestead in dugouts, for the security promised by land ownership. Then drought or the foreclosure of mortgages showed that security based on private property in land is illusion. Markets collapsed and land was taken away for bare taxes. Soviet farmers today are winning not only security against taxes and mortgages and markets but even against drought and floods. Farming is industrialized on the basis of modern machinery and division of labor. Crop losses through "acts of God" are minimized by better tillage, crop insurance, and assistance from the more fortunate areas. The control of the joint farm is democratically organized; the general meeting not only elects the management, but decides the plan of the farm and the division of work. Security on the land thus co-exists with free initiative.

This change has occurred among people whose farming was formerly notoriously backward. Ten years ago in the central grain-growing regions of Russia, there were three homemade wooden plows for every metal plow. One-third of the peasants

had no horse at all but labored for others to pay for the plowing of their own soil. Lands were divided according to a medieval system; the twenty acres of a single family might be divided into a dozen strips scattered miles apart. Scientific crop rotation and seed selection were unknown. The primitive methods of tillage steadily exhausted the soil. A typical study of grain crops in the Kirsanov district showed a steady decline of average yield from thirteen bushels per acre in 1896-1905 to ten and a half bushels in the five years preceding the World War. On this same land since the collective farm was organized in 1930 the yield rose by better tillage to an average of seventeen bushels in 1930-33, and twenty bushels in 1934-35.

In four earth-shaking years, the Soviet Union changed from a country of tiny, badly tilled holdings, worked with wooden plow and hand sickle, to the largest scale farms in the world.[1] The initiative was taken by the poorer peasants and farm hands, urged and organized by the Communists, and assisted by government credits and machines. When the Five-Year Plan swiftly increased the farm machinery available, the new collective farm

[1] In the United States farms of a thousand acres or more comprise only 7.5 per cent of the total tilled area; in the USSR in 1935, nine-tenths of the tilled area was made up of farms averaging thirteen hundred acres.

proved able to attract ever wider and wider groups of farmers. The movement was bitterly fought by the small rural capitalists known as kulaks, who farmed with hired labor, lived by money-lending, or owned small mills, threshers and other means of production and used these facilities to exploit their neighbors.[2]

The state's donation to farming and the technical help supplied by city workers proved decisive. During the years from 1930 to 1935, the Soviet government issued more than a billion dollars of direct credits to the farms for livestock and implements and spent an additional three billion for farm machinery loaned through the tractor stations;[3] it also gave food and seed loans of 157 million bushels of grain to farms in distress. At the call of the Communist Party tens of thousands of skilled workers, bookkeepers, machine repairmen, teachers

[2] Writers unacquainted with Russian rural life often confuse kulaks with peasants generally, which leads them to describe the whole collectivization movement as an attack on the peasants. But for half a century students of Russian rural districts have spoken of kulaks. In 1895 Stepniak wrote that "hard unflinching cruelty" was their main characteristic; in 1904 Wolf von Schierhand wrote of the kulak as a "usurer and oppressor in a peasant's blouse." In 1918 Dr. E. J. Dillon, in *The Eclipse of Russia*, said: "Of all the human monsters I have ever met in my travels, I cannot recall any so malignant and odious as the Russian kulak.

[3] For tractor stations 5.5 billion rubles, for direct loans 1.9 billion; these were "hard rubles" whose value may be estimated as fifty cents.

and organizers, poured into the rural districts to help organize the farms. The most difficult period was from the 1932 to the 1933 harvest when kulak sabotage, added to difficulties of inefficient organization, caused a grain shortage that put the whole country on short rations. Success was won by the 1933 harvest which reached nearly 90 million tons of grain, the largest harvest ever known in the Russian land; it was succeeded by an equal or larger grain crop in 1934 and 1935. These harvest successes helped create a government budget surplus in 1934 of 437 million rubles, which was at once applied to cancel debts owed to the state by the farmers for early expenses of organizing and equipping the collectives. This wiped out 53 per cent of the still outstanding indebtedness, including all debts incurred prior to 1933.

The economic results of collectivization have been an increase in the sown area of 30 million acres, from 293 to 323 million; a grain crop which for three years has been 15 to 20 million tons higher than the average for the five years before the collectives were formed;[4] an area sown to

[4] The average before collectivization was 78 to 80 million tons; in 1933 and 1934, 90 million; in 1935 nearly 100 million tons.

Cotton area 688,700 hectares in 1913; 802,000 in 1927, and 2,051,000 in 1933.

Sugar-beet area 648,700 in 1913; 665,000 in 1927, and 1,212,000 in 1933.

sugar beets which is double the pre-war or any previous record; and an area sown to cotton which is two and a half times either the pre-war or the pre-collectivization area. Livestock suffered catastrophically during the early years of collectivization but has been climbing rapidly back in the past three years.[5] The indications for the future are even brighter, since the rapidly improving methods of tillage and increase of fertilizer are counted upon to increase harvest yield year by year.[6] At the end of 1935 Stalin in conference with the harvester-combine operators announced that "in the very near future, in three or four years," 120 to 130 million tons of grain would be expected from the farms.

By 1935, the new forms of collective farming were sufficiently stabilized for the permanent fixing of boundaries. For at least two years practically no members had wished to leave the collective farms to return to individual farming; crop rotations and the location of fields were becoming settled. The Soviet Government thereupon issued

[5] See Chap. 7.

[6] As an example 46 per cent of all spring seeding in 1935 was done on winter-fallowed land, as compared with 25 per cent in 1930, and three-fourths of the autumn sowing in 1935 was done on summer-fallowed land as compared with 30 per cent in 1930. Similar increases have occurred in the use of selected seed, of fertilizer, scientifically planned crop rotations, and so forth.

a decree granting "perpetual use of land" to the farm collectives. All over the country today rapid surveying of boundaries goes on followed by village celebrations which record the deed for perpetual use. Speakers celebrate the change of recent years, recalling days when most of the land was owned by landlords and tenant peasants worked in the slavery of debt, when freehold peasants sold their land bit by bit to pay taxes. "From perpetual debt to perpetual ownership is the change we have made," said a Tartar farmer.

In place of the old disused boundary posts with the tsarist eagle and the inscription "Each for his own," there arise new boundary posts with the sickle and hammer and the letters, "USSR." All the land is unitedly owned by the whole country of workers and farmers, say these symbols; its use is granted perpetually to specific organizations of working farmers. As Soviet citizen, the farmer is ultimate owner, as working farmer, he is permanent user. Both ownership and use are democratically organized and the relation of the smaller group to the whole country is fixed in part by permanent law and in part by annual contracts designed to encourage efficient production and to guarantee right to the fruits of toil. Security is gained by the permanent use of land which cannot be alienated

by sale, lease, or mortgage. Freedom is secured by the democratic organization of both farm and country.

What is this group which thus becomes permanent user? The model constitution adopted by the Congress of "Farm Udarniks" [7] and ratified by the Soviet Government February 17, 1935, states that it is a "voluntary union of working farmers" who unite "in order to build with joint means of production and jointly organized labor a collective, i.e., a social husbandry, to secure full victory over the kulak and over all exploiters, to secure full victory over need and darkness, over the backwardness of small individual husbandry, to create high productivity of labor and thus insure a better life for the members.

"All boundaries formerly dividing the fields of the members are abolished. . . .

"All draft animals, farm implements, seed reserves, fodder for the collective livestock, and buildings necessary to carry on the joint farming and the processing of the farm products are socialized. . . .

"Living quarters, family cattle and fowls and the buildings necessary for their use are not socialized

[7] A delegate congress from the farms that have made the best records; their recommendations have weight as expressing the best farm practice.

but remain for the private use of the members' family." [8]

All persons over sixteen who toil on the farm have equal vote. The general meeting elects the management, accepts or expels members, decides in conference with state experts the plan for farm production, crop rotation and new improvements and sets aside within certain limits private family garden plots ranging from half to one and a half acres for the individual use of members. It also contracts for the use of machinery from the Machine Tractor Station, a service center which supplies machines and expert knowledge over about a fifteen mile radius. These stations were originally organized and financed by the state but are becoming in part co-operatively owned through shares taken by the collective farms they serve. The farm must make certain deliveries of crops to the state at low prices fixed by a state commission; it must also pay the tractor station in kind. These two payments amount to about one-fourth of the average crop; as tractor station service increases and with it the payments for machinery, the direct deliveries to the state somewhat diminish, moving

[8] Up to two head of milch cattle, one brood sow and her brood, ten sheep and goats, unlimited rabbits and chickens and twenty bee-hives in the grain, cotton, and beet regions; larger numbers are allowed for individual use in the regions devoted to livestock.

towards a time when the state will receive its quota as direct payment for machinery.

When these deliveries are made, and the seed and fodder fund set aside, the rest of the harvest may be divided among the members in proportion to the work they have done. The "work-day" is the unit for payment, but work-days are of different value according to the quantity and quality of work done. A tractor driver's day may count as two ordinary work-days, a night watchman's as three-quarters of a day. When possible, work-days are related to a definite amount of labor done —an area plowed or harvested—and additions or subtractions are made for work above or below the norm. The general meeting also sets aside part of the income for expansion and common uses such as field kitchens and day nurseries. This at first led to abuses by over-zealous farm officials wishing to build up central funds, but these amounts are now limited. In the past two years, the increased harvests have led to an increasing surplus above the government deliveries and the food required by the members. This may be freely sold, either individually or collectively, and either in town markets or through the village co-operatives, which have been greatly strengthened during the past year.

Some fifty miles from the railway, in a northern flax and rye district, the Kalinin Collective Farm

showed me its "Farm Plan," a document of eighteen long pages, neatly stitched into a pamphlet. It was a printed form issued by the Commissariat of Agriculture, with details filled out by the local organization. Acreage, meadows, arable land, orchards, crop rotations, farm implements, draft animals, cows, pigs and chickens—everything you could wish to know about the Kalinin farm is here recorded. Not only are all people listed but allowance is made for babies yet unborn; an estimated 2 per cent annual increase of population must be provided with a growing standard of living. The farm plans to provide food for people and animals, produce the marketable crops recommended for the district, erect new buildings, reclaim new fields and create an increasingly prosperous life for its members. To this end work must be assigned to use as far as possible the entire working-time of the hundred able-bodied members.

The farmer-members have discussed this plan for months before they adopted it. The township surveyor helped them plot the fields; the township land office and the Soviet newspapers have informed them that the country's standard of living is to double by 1937, and that they must do their share. This involves increasing wheat at the expense of rye, doubling the oat ration of their horses, increasing fats and meats. They know that the

state expects from them a certain amount of flax, the chief marketable crop of their district. On the basis of all this knowledge they plan for the coming year, counting on a constantly increasing crop yield through more machines and fertilizer and better methods, and on a constantly increasing prosperity through the rational assignment of work to the members. The plan includes the labor organization, with the number of total work-days needed for sowing and harvest, and the amount of labor left over for building a new library, equipping a playground and stadium or installing electricity and radios. No one need be out of a job, for all labor can be utilized to increase in various ways the prosperity and culture of the village; all will be paid by shares in the joint harvest, according to the quantity and quality of work done.

When the entire plan is accepted by the general meeting, it is registered with the township office and becomes part of the economic plan of the whole country, which is derived from and in turn controls all lesser plans. Sowing and harvest are not the affair of the individual farmer only; they are the great annual rhythm on which the nation's life depends. The whole country knows this and relates itself consciously to the plans of the farmers. Scientific conferences consider questions of insect pests and seed selection; heavy industry makes

plans to manufacture more tractors. Government and Party congresses outline the changing demands which the growing life of the land makes on farming—increase of area or yield, or a change in the proportion of crops. Congresses of farmers meet by township, province and on national scale to discuss problems of tillage and farm organization. The Russian winter which in former days was a season of hibernation in snow-bound villages, is today a season of active farm-planning on a nation-wide scale. Not even the farthest farm is isolated; visits of experts and newspaper campaigns keep it in touch with the life of the country.

When spring begins in the south, hundreds of press correspondents pour forth to cover the sowing. *Izvestia* alone sends a dozen staff correspondents and tells sixty local correspondents to concentrate on farm news. The *Peasants' Gazette* keeps several small airplanes busy, each as the center of a group of a dozen persons covering the farms. The news-gathering organization which some of the Soviet newspapers put on the sowing or harvest is beyond the scope of the biggest dailies in the capitalist world. Every provincial paper adds its reporters. The story is the world's biggest annual story with more reporters than covered the World War!

These reporters are not mere observers; their

reporting is planned to help the harvest. One journalist of my acquaintance spent forty-four days in an airplane covering harvest in the North Caucasus; he visited one hundred farms and forty Tractor Stations, and slept in the fields without one night in a bed. His reporting was for a concrete purpose; he would drop in a field, apply his yardstick and count the grain ears lost on a square yard of harvested ground; he compared various farms, discovered which ones harvested best and how they did it. Within three days he was meeting with other journalists who made similar surveys; they discussed the chief harvest problems of the season and the best ways in which these were being met. These results were at once radioed to all the farms and published through the press of the country for the benefit of other farmers as the harvest traveled north. Every season hundreds of new ideas are thus culled from the experience of the farmers and broadcast by press and radio for the use of other farms.

"A characteristic trait of the collective farm system," says Vaviloff, chief of the Plant Institute of Leningrad, "is its ability to assimilate new technical methods and make new scientific experiments."

The most striking example of the organization of great masses of farmers under the leadership of science was shown by the united fight of 1934

against the great drought which affected the whole southern half of Europe, including large areas in the Ukraine and Crimea. In many places no rain fell from April till harvest. In days of individual peasant farming, the peasants would have killed cattle for food and gone to the cities for work, putting back agriculture for several years. The collective farmers met swiftly in delegate congresses to declare "War Against Drought." They took stock of all resources and made plans to suit each region. Near the Dnieper river they seeded the overflow meadows. On the slopes of the Caucasus the Kabardinians dug thousands of miles of irrigation ditches, declaring: "We have mountains; we don't need rain." Other farms organized continuous hauling of water by fire-department wagons, or planted swamps and forest glades. Children stormed the fields in organized detachments to pull up every moisture-sucking weed. Scientists busily determined for each district what second crops could best grow where winter wheat had failed. The press gave directions about this second planting; the government shot in by fast freight the necessary seed. The USSR secured a crop equal to the bumper harvest of 1933, and even most farms in the drought-stricken regions came through with food for man and beast, and with organization strengthened.

The Soviet farmer has come out of his old isolation; he stands on the highways of the world. Through his collective farm, like the industrial worker through the factory collective, he connects with the wider life of science and art. Seven thousand farms in the Ukraine have established during the past two years their "laboratory cottages," where the farmers carry on scientific experiments based on their own fields. In a typical one I found exhibits of wheat grown under varying conditions, samples of new crops, collections of insect pests, instruments for weather recording. "Sixty farmers take part in our experiments," they told me. "We exchange data with the Zaporozhe Experimental Station." These not long since illiterate peasants who grubbed the soil blindly are farmer-scientists now, collecting nationally useful data for the conquest of harvest yields.

More than a hundred thousand drama circles for self-expression have sprung up on Soviet farms. Sport and recreation of all types grow also with tremendous speed. Farmers learn gliding, parachute jumping, even aviation. The small farm airplane which can land on a harvested field is a not infrequent visitor in farm campaigns. Extra-early sowing done by air into the mud of melting snow is a recognized means of combating drought in many regions.

By no means all Soviet farms are yet well organized, but efficiency steadily increases. By no means all of them are prosperous, but prosperity steadily grows. The change which is most apparent is in the faces of the farmers. They have lost the dull, unresponsive stare of the peasant; they are more vivid, alert. "Formerly even the peasant with the best income lived like a pig," said a Soviet farmer to me. "His only use for his surplus was to get drunk. Today he has a reading-room, a hospital, a school, a laboratory; he reads the newspapers and knows about the world. His children go from the village to build factories, to discover minerals, to conquer the Arctic, to become 'heroes of the Soviet Union.' "

More than two million letters a year from farmers pour into the offices of the *Peasants' Gazette* in Moscow, a high-piled mountain covering many tables. I asked an editor how their contents revealed the changing life of the farm. "When our paper began its existence," he said, "in the years before collectivization, we got chiefly individual complaints and requests for simple information on farm technique. 'My taxes are too high!' 'How shall I care for my cow?' Such were the letters.

"What do they write about now? The education of children, the position of women, the farm theater, the economic crisis in foreign lands. We

got five hundred original poems on the death of Kirov and seventy on the disaster to the Maxim Gorky airplane. They comment on world affairs, on China and Italy. You can't compare them with what they were ten years ago. Instead of 'my horse and cow,' their interest is wide as the world."

On the northern slopes of the Caucasus mountains, a small district of once suppressed non-Russians, known as Kabardinia, prides itself on creating "the farms of tomorrow." Its collective farmers have been known to vote the greater part of a harvest surplus to add to the government's school fund and build for their own village "the best school in the valley." They bring architects from Moscow to help them plan "farm-cities," settlements which shall combine expert farming with the culture of the town, high schools, laboratories, libraries, sound-film theaters. A forty-mile highway runs through the Kabardinian valley. Last summer travelers passing, on foot or by cart, found seven rest-stations at five-mile intervals. Brightly painted, tile-roofed pavilions were furnished with wash-basins and beds with fresh linen; large plates of watermelon were placed on the table to quench the visitor's thirst. An old man attendant refused all payment for the refreshment, saying: "This is the farm 'Dawn of Socialism'; we planted two extra acres of melons for the traveler."

CHAPTER XI

THE FREEING OF WOMEN

"Every kitchen maid must learn to rule the state."
LENIN.

Throughout the world a struggle goes on for women's equality and freedom, with varying methods and varying success. The methods most commonly known are those of different women's organizations which fight, decade after decade, for new specific increases in women's "rights." They count their victories by the number of women who one by one attain high office, by the number of rights slowly secured, the right to vote, to enter industry, to inherit property, to divorce, to some individual status after marriage.

Undoubted gains they have known, and also many disillusions. A tireless woman in New England recently told me that she had fought for thirty years to get "a decent inspection of women's labor in our state" and that they would "probably lose it at the next election." Nor does the elevation of the occasional woman to high position necessarily improve the lot of women generally. From Cleopatra down to America's women officials, ex-

ceptional women have occasionally been permitted to rule; it is not recorded that the mass of women gained more consideration from them than from men rulers. Women the world over are still unequal to men, bound by a thousand discriminations. In the backward lands of the East hundreds of millions of women are still a subject sex. Not even in the most advanced capitalist countries are they quite equal with men; the long list of disabilities against which the National Women's Party protests in America is evidence of that. Nowhere in capitalist lands have they equal access to all universities, equal pay for equal work in all industry, equal right to advance in all professions, equal rights in marriage and in the care and custody of children. Even those rights which they have attained are today under attack by fascism, which under the phrases of chivalry drives women back to the Middle Ages.

It is therefore the more amazing that Soviet women should have gained so swiftly an equality unknown elsewhere in the world. They receive equal pay for equal work and no jobs are closed to them. They have equal opportunity in education and in government. They have equal rights and duties in marriage; they are free to have or not to have children. They have full political, economic, legal and social equality, as human beings

and citizens. This has been attained in eighteen years in a country where women were once suppressed not only in the European but also in the Asiatic manner. Tsarist law made Russian wives the property of their husbands "in duty bound to render him love, respect and in all things obedience to his wishes." They had no right to separate passports; if they ran away, the police returned them to their husbands. This law was reinforced by brutal peasant customs; Gorky relates the sight of an unfaithful wife bound naked to a cart and flogged by her peasant husband into unconsciousness in the midst of a jeering, applauding crowd. In tsarist Central Asia millions of dark-skinned Mohammedan women lived in the seclusion of harems and behind black veils.

The freeing of women takes place in the Soviet Union swiftly because it is not a woman's fight alone. It comes as part of the freeing of human beings by giving them joint ownership over the country's means of production, irrespective of sex, color or race. . . . "The emancipation of women is not only the work of women Communists but of men Communists also, just as the fight for socialism is a mutual fight," said Krupskaia, widow of Lenin. The Communists hold that the gains in women's freedom made through centuries have been chiefly due to change in methods of produc-

tion. The modern factory freed women from the patriarchal home, but imposed its own form of slavery; it used women to cut down wages, thus increasing the antagonism of the sexes. Economic slavery is the basis of all other inequalities, the key-log in the jam which must first be loosed that all others may rush free.

No freedom comes without battle. The October Revolution created the economic, legal and political basis of woman's equality. The industrialization of the country was the consciously applied weapon for making woman equal with man. Yet in every village and factory women still had to fight their way over the traditional habits of centuries, which lingered in their own souls and in the souls of men. But these barriers of the past were no longer buttressed by ancient law and by the need of private industry for cheap woman's labor.

The first women to establish their freedom were the workers in the factories who took part with their men in the Revolution. I recall Dunia, who was once an illiterate textile worker, living with husband and children in the same room with another family, nine people in all. Dunia was one of those who in the first year of Revolution seized the manager's house for a day nursery so that her children might have space to grow. She learned to

read and began to rise in political and social work, as did simultaneously millions of others. She said to me: "Once life went on without us workers, still more without us women. The father gave her to the husband; she was slave to her man and her factory. Now I am slave to no one. The road is open to all life." This phrase of the "open road to life" I have heard hundreds of times from working women.

The emancipation of peasant women came more slowly. Scores of women presidents of villages have told me of their difficulties with the peasant men who jeered at "petticoat rule." "They laughed at the first woman we elected to the village Soviet so much that she could do nothing; at the next election we put in six women and now it is we who laugh." This was a typical statement.

The widespread collectivization of farming in 1930 gave women's freedom in the rural districts its needed economic base. Farm women everywhere in the collective farms are awakening to the implications of their independent income. Drunken husbands are no longer masters in the home. "I got for myself a warm new coat, a dress and shoes; I got clothes for the children," said a farm woman displaying her purchases in the local market. "But my man spent his money on drink and I'll buy him nothing. I've told him if he gets drunk again I'll

throw him out of the house and not even feed him. The farm will back me up, unless he quits drinking and loafing. I can get along without him in the collective farm." Some thirty million farm women from Leningrad to Vladivostok are awakening to the amazing fact that they can get along economically without their husbands.

Most cruel and bloody of all was the fight for women's freedom in those lands of Central Asia where for centuries veiled women had been sold like chattels to the harems. Here local religion and custom supported men who murdered their wives for the crime of unveiling. When young folks in Tashkent schools spent vacations agitating for women's freedom, one girl's body was sent back in a cart. Accompanying the hacked pieces were the words: "This is your women's freedom." In another locality of Central Asia, nine murders of women occurred before any were discovered by central authority; every attempt of a woman to get justice was met by local vengeance.

But the women of Central Asia, led by the hope which the new government gave them and the new industries encouraged, fought their way into freedom. The blood of martyrs stirred them to greater struggle; fifty thousand women marched at the funeral of the Tashkent girl student. In Bokhara, citadel of Mohammedan orthodoxy, a spectacular

unveiling of women in great meetings and processions took place on International Women's Day, March 8, 1928. Amid indescribable enthusiasm they tore off veils, stamped on them, threw them on the streets and at the feet of speakers. When one woman was murdered by her husband for this unveiling, a public trial was held in a great mass meeting; the murderer was swiftly condemned and executed. From that time women walked unveiled in holiest Bokhara. Today a woman, Abidova, who at the age of twelve was sold in marriage to pay a fifteen-ruble debt of her father, is vice-president of the Uzbek Republic, and its permanent representative in Moscow.

These women of the East are quite aware of the relation of their new freedom to the socially owned means of production.

> The roar of the factory is in me.
> It gives me rhythm,
> It gives me energy,

sing the Uzbek girls of the state silk mill which brought them out of the harems. Another song makes the application wider:

Flower of the East, the time has come
To cast off the veil and the paranja. . . .
For a thousand years you slept in darkness under the yoke.

When you awake, when you arise from deep sleep,
The workers of the world await you!

Steadily the share of Soviet women in industry and in public life has climbed upward. The percentage of women among industrial workers has risen by a steady 3 per cent a year during the Five-Year Plan, and is now (1935) 42 per cent of all persons gainfully employed. In technical higher schools 36 per cent of the students are women, in medical schools 75 per cent; in no institution of learning is there any discrimination against women. The percentage of women who took part in elections rose from 28 per cent of all eligible women in 1926 to 80.3 per cent in 1934. Women constituted 18.2 per cent of the membership of city soviets in 1926; this rose to 32.1 per cent in 1934. The change in the rural districts was greater; a 9.9 percentage of women in 1926 in village soviets rose to 26.4 per cent in 1934. Only 0.6 per cent of the villages had women presidents in 1926, though even this figure testified to the successful fight of thousands of women; by 1934 the figure was over 8 per cent. More than a million women today hold some form of public office in the soviets, including 400,000 elected members of soviets, 400,000 members of local government commissions, 112,000 "co-judges" in the courts, a

function similar to but somewhat more specialized than that of our jurors, and 100,000 members of managing boards of co-operatives.

The city of Tver, now renamed Kalinin, gives an example of the varied kinds of work done by women. As a textile town, its population included a large proportion of women textile workers before the Revolution, a fact which explains its present status as a progressive city, boasting itself among the first Soviet cities in which women attained their full half of the seats in the city government. (Other cities are steadily following, as women through initiative and education take advantage of their legal right to equality.) Tver's two most important women are Anna Kaligina, city secretary of the Communist Party, than which no higher post in the city exists, and Feodorova, who held till recently the prize of "best weaver" for the USSR. Thousands of others follow in the footsteps of these leaders.

Policeman Lily travels fearlessly through dark woods about the city to round up criminal gangs. On one occasion, when she was convoying a prisoner caught setting fire to turf fields, she was set upon in the woods by two of his accomplices and brought back to jail not one criminal but three. That same evening she played the part of fragile heroine in lilac gown in the local dramatic club, for

Lily is an ardent amateur actress specializing in dainty feminine parts. Black-eyed Katya is a street-car conductor, with the best record among the twenty-seven woman conductors of Tver. She is also in the second year of the workers' college, where she studies Turgenieff and geometry. Morosov, the motorman, writes poems about her.

All the young men admire Nina, eighteen-year-old glider pilot, who three days a week sails through the air on light wings. Her regular job is in the car works, making valves for railway cars. But her pastime is the aviation club and she expects some day to be an aviator. Zoya is champion motor mechanic in a clothing factory and also chairman of its shop committee, handling trade union affairs for five hundred and sixty women; in her spare time she is an enthusiastic ski runner, who took second place in a contest held by the clothing workers of five provinces. Marusia is studying to be a doctor; Tonia is a former spinner who did such good work on the wall newspaper that she is now a full time writer. Dusia was the first woman chauffeur in the city; the boys used to run after her yelling, "girl driver." One by one the girls of Tver have conquered every trade and profession. So have the women throughout the USSR.

Foreign visitors are occasionally shocked to find

women taking part in heavy and dirty labor, field work, street-cleaning, even digging the subway. But Soviet women are still of the generation of peasants, who worked in the fields. They know that in all ages women have done heavy labor; it is the skilled work from which they have been barred. They know that equal share in labor means in the USSR equal share in ruling and in all opportunities of life. So young girls fought for the right to equal work on the subway, against engineers and miners who didn't want to let the women underground. They worked knee-deep in water alongside experienced men, challenged them to records and often beat them. "The subway was the richest experience of my life," said a prize-winning girl.

There are, however, regulations governing women's labor, which prohibit work proved by experience more dangerous to women than to men. Women may not engage in trades involving danger of lead poisoning, may not lift weights above a certain amount. Special regulations, reinforced by medical observation, surround the whole period of pregnancy, and the last six to eight weeks women may not work.[1] Many labor processes are con-

[1] Six weeks before and six weeks after childbirth for office jobs; eight weeks before and eight weeks after for physical labor; longer periods may be ordered at any time by the doctor, and are given without loss of wages.

stantly under investigation to determine whether or not they are injurious to women; when experiment shows that they are, they are prohibited. This is no sex discrimination but part of the ordinary routine of the public health service, which steadily investigates the effect of occupations and bars from them those groups of the population which might be injured. Thus sand-blasting trades are prohibited to youth, which is more susceptible than older people are to tuberculosis from sand-blasting. No trade or profession is prohibited in advance as "unwomanly"; any trade may be barred after investigation to any group or individual on grounds of public health.

Not access to heavy labor but to skilled professions distinguishes Soviet women from those of other lands. Anna Kofanova won fame as operator of a combined-harvester, harvesting 1,500 acres in one season, the township record. Natalia Mikhailova is director of a machine tractor station entirely manned by women which services the 15,000 acres of thirty-two collective farms. Shchetinina, a ship captain, navigates the ocean. The envelopes of Soviet stratostats were designed by a woman chemist. Irene Rousinova was the first woman polar explorer, wintering several seasons in the north; she has been followed by hosts of others, including Nina Demme, who for two years has

managed the scientific station on North Land. Galina Medovnik weeded tobacco in tsarist days as a girl of eight, fought in the Red Army during the civil war and was several times condemned to death; she escaped to become today a representative of housewives in the Moscow Soviet, where she superintends the building of apartment houses for workers.

Equality in work has given to women equality in every field of life: education, politics, marriage. The assumption behind the Soviet marriage code is the equal human dignity of both parties in deciding their intimate relations—a decision with which the state has no right to interfere. State action is limited to protection of children and prevention of force or fraud. Young couples appearing at the Marriage Registry Bureau are therefore required to give name, residence, occupation, past marital history, any children, and the future name which each intends to take. Questions to each are identical. The same name is often taken but not always. A person who infects another with disease is criminally liable. Property owned before marriage remains individual; that later acquired is jointly owned. Any married person who desires a divorce gets it, nor has the state the right to ask the reason. Both parties are responsible for the care and support of children up to eighteen and for giving the

other partner any needed temporary economic aid to establish the independent relation. Recent much publicized changes in the divorce code were only a better bookkeeping, insuring that both persons actually knew of the divorce and were actually held for the support of children.

Recent comments of Soviet leaders that more time should be given to family life are similarly part of the general emphasis on richer human relations now possible through increasing leisure rather than any belated recognition of the family. Casual attitudes toward marriage have been discouraged from the beginning; no one was more emphatic on this than Lenin. But the pressure is social rather than legal. Trade unions, collective farms and Party organizations will penalize, even to the point of expulsion, persons who cause social havoc through their sexual instability. But they consider concrete situations, not traditions. The continuous and open living together of two people is respected, whether or not they are "registered"; it constitutes marriage in both the social and legal sense. Taking advantage of another person is penalized, through whatever forms accomplished. Peasants who took advantage of the marriage code to secure brief brides for harvest work soon stopped when they found this gave the woman equal right to the harvest. One notorious case

some years ago was that of a man who seduced a girl by marriage and threw her out next morning; he was convicted of rape, which is legally defined as sex relations obtained through force or fraud, and was punished by imprisonment. The fact of the marriage registration was rather an aggravation than otherwise; he had used a Soviet office to assist fraud.

Problems occasionally arise in marriage from the fact that both partners have jobs. I met a girl tractor-driver in Siberia who married a tractor-driver on another field brigade. They spent their honeymoon some miles apart; once each week the young man walked ten or twelve miles on his free day to stay with his bride. The girl never met him half-way; she was boss of the winning brigade and took no chances. To my casual query why they did not get into the same field-gang, both exclaimed: "Desert my brigade in sowing-time!"

A woman's relation to the state is always individual; it is never through her husband. Not even the wives of great men may live by reflected glory. When Stalin's wife died, the black-bordered announcements in the press gave her own name and occupation in the artificial silk industry, and only after this mentioned that she was the "close friend and companion of Stalin." Kalinin's wife wins recognition by creating a state farm and center of

culture in the Altai Mountains, where they call her by her own name, not by the name of the president.

The tradition that love is "woman's whole existence" is challenged by a new assumption, a refusal to admit that any human being's happiness can be completely dependent on one other human being. When Salima, a young woman of Turkestan, accepted a scholarship to study in Tashkent, her husband ordered her to return, and, on her refusal, divorced her, boasting by letter that he had taken another wife "obedient and illiterate." Salima showed her quality by replying: "I received your letter telling me that you have another wife. I will have my revenge. When I finish my studies I will come back to the village and teach your second wife to read and write." The older generation may be horrified by the flippant Salima, but the new Soviet generation will applaud her as a free and self-reliant citizen.

The freedom of every woman to dispose of her own body, to marry or not to marry, to have children or not to have them, irrespective of marriage, is taken for granted by Soviet law, and is restrained only by social opinion, not by legal penalty. Dr. Milashkevich, head of the Gynecological section of the great polyclinic, where a medical personnel

of three hundred serves the thirty-five thousand workers of Stalin Auto Works, told me that all women working in the plant come to her as part of their routine health examination. "If they are married I ask them: 'Do you want children?' Then I give them medical advice according to their intentions. If they do not want children, the polyclinic supplies the means of prevention." She further informed me that every attempt was made to discourage abortion, by urging grounds of health, and by sending nurses and even neighbors to reason with the wife and husband, but never by absolute refusal. "To compel a woman either to have or not to have children we would consider an infringement of human rights," said Dr. Milashkevich. "If she decides to have them, the state gives every assistance, through free medical and hospital care, special funds for milk and children's clothing and the use of day nurseries to care for children during her working hours." That the women are deciding to have children is clear from the average increase of population of three million annually—in the past two years of growing prosperity three and a half million [2]—an increase unparalleled in any other land.

Every year the Soviet Union produces its crop of national heroes, who spring into fame for some

[2] Figures from Soviet Statistical Dept. 1936.

notable achievement and whose methods are widely copied. In 1935 the names most heard were those of Stakhanov, a miner, and Marie Demchenko, a farm woman. A former farm servant of the sugar beet districts, Marie had risen through collectivization of farming, and the knowledge she gained in the laboratory cottage, to challenge in spring of 1935 all the beet growers of the land. "Let us flood the land with sugar. My brigade will get twenty tons of beets per acre." Hundreds of letters accepted; hundreds of visitors came to inspect the fields which Marie's determined brigade of women nine times hoed, and eight times cleared of moths by setting fires at night. They conquered a rainless August by the local fire-fighting apparatus, pouring twenty thousand buckets of water on their fields. They won twenty-one tons per acre and came to the November celebrations in Moscow to receive the Order of Lenin amid the plaudits of the entire country.

Who were these women singled out for honor? They were women who got down in the dirt to dig sugar beets, who soiled their hands with slimy insects that a beet crop might be improved. What made their achievement honored? This—that their beets were no commodity for private profit, but sugar for the workers of a nation. They were

leaders in the public task of farming a continent. This made of the hitherto unregarded toil of farm women a heroic collective epic, worthy to be classed with the work of explorers who raid the Arctic or scientists who storm the stratosphere.

CHAPTER XII

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF SCIENCE

"Russian is now recognized in American universities as a scientific language," said a young Californian who was visiting with me the Leningrad Institute for Plant Protection. "Four years ago the universities wouldn't take it as one of the two languages required for a scientific degree. But now my professors tell me that for my specialty of farm pests, it is the most important language of all. More original work is appearing in it than in any other language. German and French research is older and was translated some years ago. But our universities haven't funds today to translate all this new research appearing in Russian."

This American youth hardly connected in his mind the decline in German and French research and the lack of American university funds for translation with the world-wide economic crisis. He knew little of the collectivization of Soviet farming and the stimulus it had given to his branch of science. But across two seas and two continents the results of these causes had reached the aloof halls of a university in California, interpreted thus

"Russian—a scientific language—original research not yet found in translation."

Visiting scientists at the Fifteenth International Physiology Congress which met in Leningrad in August 1935, expressed an appreciation not untinged with amazement at the high respect paid science by the Soviet government and the rapid strides made by Soviet science in recent years. "No government ever 'took up' science as has this government. . . ." "Even the Americans are startled by the amount of resources which can be placed at the disposal of science by a government planning on a national scale. . . ." Such were some of the comments which found their way into the press of New York. Professor Walter B. Cannon, of the Harvard Medical School, told the Congress how science suffers today in all the capitalist countries, and added: "In the Soviet Union, where the social importance of science is appreciated, the funds made available for the development and prosecution of science are greater than in any country in the world." The report of the Congress later given in *Science*, official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, noted "the respect with which scientists are treated," "the important position which science, pure as well as applied, occupies in the national

economy," and the "ardor of the army of young scientific workers."

Soviet citizens take it for granted—Marxists in fact have taken it for granted ever since the days of Marx—that science must naturally reach a much freer and fuller development under socialism than is possible under capitalism. Capitalism, whose early expansion a century or more ago encouraged and boasted its science, has already reached the stage where science is an embarrassment, since the possibilities of human development which it reveals are unrealizable under private ownership. Science itself under capitalism suffers from a lack of aim. In England the head of the oldest agricultural experiment station in the world told a visiting Russian scientist that he hardly knew what to investigate since the declining condition of farming in England and the antagonisms in Egypt and India prevented the application of everything he discovered. In America the hostility between science and capitalism is only in its first stages, and is marked by increasing suppression of new knowledge which would interfere with profit. In Germany where a collapsing capitalism has taken the form of fascism, there is already a deep distrust of human reason and a propaganda against the very existence of science.

In the Soviet Union science is rapidly expand-

ing. Communism demands the thorough-going application of science to remake all human life; it assumes that the intellect of man can progressively understand and subdue nature to his collective will. "A new historical epoch will begin," said Engels, "when men and their work will improve to such an extent that all previous achievements will seem as but a feeble shadow." "We are confident that in our epoch we are entering an era of unparalleled progress in science," is a typical editorial comment today in a Moscow newspaper. President Karpinsky, of the All-Union Academy of Science, spoke of the USSR as "the country where science is given a place of honor," when he greeted the visiting physiologists "on behalf of hundreds of research institutes." Even the famous physiologist, I. P. Pavlov, who was always antagonistic to Bolshevik ideas, said recently that he wanted to live to be a hundred because "the Soviet government has given millions for my scientific work and my laboratories flourish as never before."

Those doubters who fear that state subsidies for science interfere more with scientific freedom than do the subsidies of individual millionaires, and who promote abroad the idea that the Soviets "persecute scientists," ignore the fact that a high esteem for science is quite consistent with a deep suspicion of individual scientists. Conflicts did persist be-

tween the Soviet government and certain scientists who used their knowledge to fight the Revolution. That sabotage by scientists and engineers occurred on a very wide scale during the early years of the first Five-Year Plan has been acknowledged by thousands of former saboteurs. Only when the victory of the Five-Year Plan was assured beyond question did these waverers finally come over to find that socialism gives far greater opportunities for their science than capitalism ever did or could.[1]

The Academy of Science has been greatly expanded from the three departments, mathematics, natural sciences, and historical philology, which it comprised before the Revolution. It is the center for planning and co-ordinating the scientific activity of the entire country through its twenty-one large departments and its frequent inter-departmental sessions. It works hand in hand with the State Planning Commission which indicates to it the requests for widespread scientific research in particular fields needed for the development of the country. It is also the court of appeal for all scientists who disagree with government departments or research institutes on questions of their work, or who want to do research for which no appropriation yet exists. In all conflicts on the objectives of research the Academy decides, being liberally

[1] See details in Chap. 3, page 52-3.

financed directly under the All-Union government. The city of Moscow has recently assigned to the Academy 1,250 acres on the Moscow River, where the first of forty-two projected buildings are now being built.

More than one thousand scientific research institutes in the USSR, employing 41,000 scientific workers, were claimed at the Physiology Congress by Akulov, Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the government. Many of these institutes are of monumental size and scope. The All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine, for instance, is the organizing center of all medical research in the USSR. Scientists, doctors and engineers worked for two years on the construction plan of its new home where 5,500 employees are to study "the biology and pathology of the human being from every aspect." Hospitals of the institute make continuous study of typical cases of various diseases and healthy people are also studied as "controls."

One of the largest of the scientific institutions is the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which correlates the work of nearly sixty institutes for research in soil chemistry, plant protection, livestock breeding, microbiology, agrometeorology and similar branches of science. The work of the agricultural institutes is based upon material ob-

tained in 200 experiment stations and more than 1,500 smaller research stations in state and collective farms. Each of the subordinate institutes is an important organization in itself; the Institute for Plant Protection, for instance, has a central staff of 250 scientific workers and dozens of branches all over the country.

The expansion of Soviet science arises not only from the need of socialism for scientific planning, but from the wide interest and co-operation on the part of the people. The Academy of Science is no secluded institution of the aristocracy; it is the unity of the scientific brains of the country with the masses. Science in the Soviet Union is dear to all the people, for every citizen knows that its discoveries will become his own possession and not the property of a small privileged group. "We scientists used to feel ourselves rather unimportant, since we had already discovered so much more than people were able to apply, but now that the collective farms demand our science, we see our work for several thousand years," said Vaviloff, Vice-Chairman of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences and world-famous discoverer and creator of new plants.

The wide interest of the Soviet population in science expresses itself not only in honor to scientists but in active participation in scientific work

by great numbers of people. Every scientific institution receives much popular co-operation, from workers, farmers, even from children. When the All-Union geological survey sent some two thousand annual expeditions with seventy to eighty thousand participants to explore and map the resources of the Soviet Union during the first Five-Year Plan, these official expeditions became the correlating center of a still broader popular movement. Thousands of grammar school children became "discoverers of our country," going with their teachers to study geological outcroppings. Tens of thousands of hikers learned from geologists what to look for on cliffs and mountain slopes and occasionally made discoveries of significance. One of the stimulating causes of the first great Pamir expedition came from a Khirghiz nomad who carried a gold nugget several days' journey to Samarkand and fought his way through many bureaucratic offices because he "thought the government ought to know about the gold in the Pamirs."

Every large factory has its bureau of workers' inventions through which inventive genius of workers finds connection with the wider world. Workers and farmers who make practical discoveries are often asked to report them in their own non-technical words at scientific congresses. Scientists in turn give frequent lectures in factories on

subjects applicable to the work of the plant. Analysis of steel by the spectrum method will be reported to a machine-building plant, and discussions on organic chemistry will be given by scientists at a rubber works to a large attendance of interested workers.

So deep and thorough is the interest taken by workers in science that the cleavage between workingmen and scientists already lessens, presaging that time predicted by Marx when the distinction between mental and manual labor will disappear. At a banquet held by the Academy of Science in the Neskuchny Palace in Moscow, a number of leading factory workers were present as guests. A foreign newspaperman, wishing to interview Professor Bach, a well-known member of the Academy, approached a man who was pointed out to him from a distance. They chatted half an hour about the revolution in culture, the creation of a new life, and the new type of human being now appearing under socialism. In parting, the correspondent asked for the Academician's autograph. The man to whom he was speaking started in surprise. "My name is Ivanov; Bach is the person sitting next to me," he said, pointing to a man who had been attentively listening. "I myself am a locksmith from the ball-bearing plant."

One of the most striking examples of the de-

mocratization of science is the "laboratory cottage," which has developed in the last two years on the collective farms. Seven thousand of these centers of experiment are reported in the Ukraine alone. The head of the laboratory is somtimes a teacher of the village school, but more often a self-educated farmer who has the scientific instinct and whose enthusiasm has organized other farmers to make experiments in their fields and correspond with scientific stations.

"This scientific tendency in human beings takes such varied forms," said an editor, "that one cannot even classify them. In the past these scientific instincts often died stillborn because of poverty. Today we seek them out through many agencies; one of these is our *Peasants' Gazette*. Today a new type of experimenter is developing who does not experiment secretly but organizes the masses around him to discover and carry out new ideas. There is often some waste of time and destruction of machinery in these experiments. But this does not worry us. What is important and valuable is that the human being is striving to change, to improve. Waste of time and destruction of materials matters nothing, if thereby we add even one drop of knowledge which enables man to increase his understanding and control of nature."

One such natural scientist was Akulov, a peasant

of the Genichesk district. As a World War prisoner in Austria, he saw one head of grain much bigger than the surrounding heads. He kept it and eventually brought it home to his own garden to breed new giant heads. When the collective farm was formed in his village in 1930, Akulov had four bushels of this special grain to give them. The big heads were planted and cherished until there were several score acres of them. The samples were then sent to the All-Union Institute of Plants and found to be a new variety existing nowhere else in the world.

Seventy-five-year-old illiterate Barashev was another such natural scientist. For nearly twenty years he worked to produce a frost-resistant flax; the collective fields of his farm are harvesting it this year. Pechtilief, in the Leningrad district, stirred up such an interest among his neighbors in discovering why two fields on the same farm gave such different yields, that the whole village became one vast experimental farm, planting several thousand acres in various ways and comparing the results of different types of tillage. Pechtilief appeared before the Congress of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences to demand that scientists find a way to produce a new variety of wheat which should combine the high milling quality of one variety with the non-shattering characteristics of a

second. Kolosev, another collective farmer, has challenged the scientists to work out types of seeds and tillage which will insure different ripening times for the various crops and thus get an even load of work through a maximum period for the harvesting machine.

The assimilation of new scientific ideas proceeds far faster under the new collective farm system than under the old individual farming. Some entire districts have already become agricultural experiment stations. In Zhadryansk district, near Cheliabinsk, several thousand experiments were carried on in a single summer with oats, wheat, green peas, sunflower seeds and other crops. Special conferences were held attended by two hundred or more delegates from the various laboratory cottages. All these popular experiments are in constant touch with the scientific organizations of the Commissariat of Agriculture, and are protected against undue loss by a government policy of crop insurance.

Several achievements of Soviet agricultural science are already of world significance. The method of "vernalization," which changes winter wheat to spring wheat, late cotton to early cotton and biennial to annual plants, has made it possible to grow Algerian wheat beyond the Polar circle, at 67.4 degrees of latitude in Khibiny. The northernmost

botanical gardens in the world are on the Kola Peninsula, where experiments with six hundred plants found twenty-five that could be adapted to the Arctic. The Soviet Union has developed its own rubber industry from the newly discovered "rubber" plants, tau-sagiz and kok-sagiz, found in the mountains of Turkestan and cultivated later as far north as the Ukraine. The brilliant work of Michurin in developing frost-resistant varieties of fruits made him famous not only among scientists of the world but among millions of Soviet farmers, tens of thousands of whom journey annually to his plant-breeding station to report on their use of his varieties.

New machines have been developed, a machine for retching flax which is revolutionizing the flax industry, a "northern" combined-harvester suitable for grain of high moisture content. Even the ordinary combine first imported from America has undergone sixty improvements and is said by experts to be the best in the world. Research into soil microbiology has made, according to Vaviloff, "the role of micro-organisms in the soil a calculable factor." The artificial fertilization of livestock, in which the spermatozoa are sent by mail or airplane from experimental stations to the laboratory cottages, is today applied to half the country's livestock, insuring rapid improvement of stock from

pure-bred males. Under the constant co-operation of collective farmers with scientific centers, the agricultural map of the country is rapidly changing. Sugar beets expand towards the Urals, cotton appears in South Ukraine, irrigation and tree-planting begins to reclaim the wastes beyond the Volga, and wheat marches steadily towards the Arctic. Thousands of acres are today successfully farmed in the Murmansk district on the Arctic Ocean, in place of a scant twelve acres a few years ago.

The most spectacular example of the planned advance of man under the leadership of science is the conquest of the Polar regions, which has stirred the imagination and enthusiasm of the whole Soviet land. Scientists of the All-Union Arctic Institute first seriously broached the idea of a Great Northern Sea Route in 1930, though other scientists declared that traffic along the northern coast of Europe and Asia was "impracticable during the present glacial epoch." The Soviet government backed its bolder scientists, established the Central Administration of the Northern Sea Route and gave it ships and funds. Step by step the rapid advance was made, first by dozens of expeditions which mapped coasts and charted waters, then by thirty-nine Polar scientific stations, equipped with radio and airplane service, then by trading fleets led by ice-breakers first from the west, then from the east,

and then along the whole Polar coast from Atlantic to Pacific.

The whole world remembers the epic of the Chelyushkin, its tragic wreck northwest of Bering Straits, the skillful landing on ice which was crashing around them, the two months of heroic organization of "normal life" in their floating home on the ice-floe, where Professor Schmidt, dressed in deer-skin coat and fur cap, delivered lectures on dialectic materialism or the Freudian theory, and found time to edit the galleys of the *Unabridged Soviet Encyclopedia* which he had brought from Moscow, and to write a preface to a book on higher mathematics. The history of Polar expeditions has known many examples of daring, but never such courageously casual organization of normal routine under abnormal conditions as this "Soviet Republic on the Ice" which got out its "wall newspaper" with cartoons and self-criticism, and comments on the Communist Party Congress then taking place in Moscow, received by the Chelyushkinites by radio.

Today special ships are built in Soviet shipyards, embodying the experience of the Chelyushkin for the conquest of the northern seas. Steadily the designs of airplanes and clothing have been adapted to Arctic weather and the plane is now the "eyes of the north." Four ordinary freighters in the

summer of 1935 made the whole trip around the north of Europe and Asia, and scores will follow in 1936. The network of heroic scientists, wintering in thirty-nine stations, begins to be supplemented by miners, timber-workers, even farmers. Extensive prospecting has been done for minerals, especially coal and oil to serve the northern trade route. A new type of man is following the explorers and scientists—engineers, technicians, builders of the Arctic. And science pushes farther north in the expedition of the Sadko, to discover, at latitude 82° 40′—the farthest north ever reached in free sailing—the re-emergence of a warm section of the Gulf Stream which may make the northern sea route practicable for more months of the year. Of all the world's eight ships which have reached during the past half century the latitudes around 80°, two were American, two Scandinavian and four were Soviet ships of the past few years.

It is the support of the whole Soviet country which strengthens these men of the north in their conquests. The entire Soviet population regards these Arctic subduers as their representatives and champions. It shares their lives by radio hook-ups; Moscow talks through the six months' night with Dixon Island, which issues the Arctic Radio News. All Russia thrilled when a young ex-criminal, sent to the far north to "make himself over," was reas-

sured across three thousand frozen miles by the voice of his factory sweetheart urging him to make good. When a winter childbirth in a distant Arctic station developed complications, the neighbors got the Dixon Island surgeon on the radio and for more than three hours he directed over the air every detail while the whole of a much-worried Arctic listened in. When the child and mother were safe, congratulations poured in from thousands of miles of icebound waterfront.

Even under capitalism science breaks the boundaries of nations, steadily to lift the power of man. Under socialism it becomes the consciously applied and swiftly expanding strength of the whole population, conquering for man his world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF ART

"Heroic people call into being heroic artists."
Editorial in Soviet *Literary Critic.*

If science is the instrument of man's dominance over nature, art is the means of his self-expression. Tens of millions of people from earth's most backward races have awakened in the Soviet Union from long slumber. They are seeking self expression. They themselves write, sing and paint; they push up from their ranks novelists, poets and dramatists. They love these poets and dramatists; they criticize them and make serious demands from them. Soviet art is not private property, it is the wealth of the nation, and the nation is jealous and proud of its wealth.

When the first All-Union Congress of Soviet writers met in Moscow in August, 1934, thousands of letters poured in from all corners of the union, congratulating, greeting, giving practical suggestions and advice. Workers, collective farmers, students, Young Pioneers, scientists, engineers and artists thus expressed their interest in the Congress. In Moscow alone, more than two hundred factory

conferences were held between readers and authors. Delegations representing millions of readers came to speak at the Congress. Each day after the meetings, authors found throngs of workers who had been unable to enter the crowded hall waiting outside to hail their favorite writers with applause. Throughout the country, millions of people concentrated their attention on questions of esthetics, the function of poetry, the form of literature best suiting the present age, subjects reported in detail in the press. Literary work in the land of the Soviets is becoming the affair of all the toilers.

There are no bounds to the desire for every variety of culture. Soviet Russia in its first fifteen years published five billion books, as contrasted with two billion in the last thirty years of tsardom. The number keeps growing. At the end of the first Five-Year Plan, book production in the USSR was greater than that of England, Germany and France together. Especially amazing is the growth of literature among the national minorities whose self-expression was suppressed under tsardom. Every year since 1929 has seen the publication of more books in the Ukrainian language than were published in the whole 118 years before the Revolution. One publishing house alone, the Moscow International Book House, publishes books in eighty-five languages, some of which had formerly

no alphabet—novels, textbooks, folk tales, technical works, translations of classics, short stories and dictionaries.

The Soviet world feels itself the heir of the ages. Anniversaries of poets, scientists and artists of all countries are widely celebrated. The ancient Persian poet Firdousi, the English Shakespeare, the German Goethe, the famous French writers, are honored by mass meetings and columns in the press. The best works of Flaubert, Mérimée, Maupassant, Victor Hugo, Mark Twain and Jack London appear by the hundreds of thousands of copies and disappear almost as quickly from the shelves of bookstores which never expect to retain volumes more than a few weeks. Russian classics are even more popular. Lermontov, Nekrassov, Korolenko, Gogol, Turgenev, Chekhov appear in editions of seventy to a hundred thousand. The favorite poet Pushkin has been issued for several years in repeated editions of two hundred thousand copies, and his collected works in six volumes now face a subscription demand of three hundred thousand copies, exclusive of sales to the shops. Tolstoy is the most popular of all; eleven and a half million copies of his works have been sold since the Revolution.

The Soviet reader demands not only the art of the past but the art of today. The most popular

novels are those like Sholokhov's *Quiet Don* and *Soil Upturned*, which paint on a wide canvas the personalities, difficulties, struggles and victories of the present. "No artist of the past had such material at his disposal as is given by the earth-shaking events occurring in the USSR in the last eighteen years," said the Soviet writer Panferov speaking at a Paris congress. "The working class built a dam on the surging Dnieper and made its unruly waters serve man. It transformed the misty Urals into an industrial center, mastered the wild and distant Kuzbas. . . . In remaking the country the working class at the same time remade itself. . . . The outcast dweller of the mountains, the illiterate, solitary Yakut, the northern Nentsi, the wild Bashkir, the Mordvin with his trachoma, the persecuted Kalmyk—tens of millions of peoples in scores of scattered nationalities went into the furnace of civil war and are energetically rebuilding the country, conquering the strongholds of culture, bringing new life to the whole world. . . . Socialist realism was the inevitable phenomenon of the proletarian era—active, cheerful, bold and daring, like the era of the proletarian revolution itself."

These tens of millions of people are not only the subjects for art, they are also the artists, readers and audience. They show a wide interest in all forms of artistic expression. Theaters are con-

stantly crowded; art museums are packed with visitors; popular exhibitions sometimes have lines before the museum entrances waiting until there is room to go in. Nor are the factory workers and collective farmers at all backward in expressing their opinion on the products of brush and pen. Are they not all also writers, artists, musicians and actors, if and when the mood seizes them? They are not only consumers of art, millions of them are amateur producers of it.

More than one hundred thousand "circles for self-expression" have grown up in the past two years in the USSR. The drama circles alone have 1,200,000 members, while the total number in the singing, music, dancing and graphic art circles exceeds five million. Writers, cartoonists and photographers for the local press or wall newspapers are probably as many more. A chief characteristic of the new type of person now emerging in the Soviet Union is his dynamic energy in self-expression, usually in some collective form.

The first and most direct self-expression of large numbers takes the form of participation in the press. They write their opinions about corrupt officials or inefficient farm management for the hand-lettered sheet posted on a factory wall or a village tree-trunk; more important communications they send, often with several signatures, to the

great metropolitan *Pravda* or *Izvestia* with their million and a half subscribers. Two million letters a year pour into the office of the *Peasants' Gazette* in Moscow, reflecting the life and problems of the farm; only part of them can be published but all of them are answered, filed, and carefully studied as material for novels, for history, and for the law-making of the state.

In a northern township, fifty miles from the railroad, where before the Revolution only six people subscribed to any newspaper at all, I visited a congress of some two hundred rural press correspondents preparing for a sowing campaign. These were only part of the energetic writers of this township. Its collective farms had 470 field brigades, every one of which during the sowing campaign posted up a wall newspaper. One picturesque seventeen-year-old boy in a vivid shirt of old rose sateen under a black jacket proudly reported the overthrow of the corrupt management of his collective farm by his articles and editorials. "We got out nine numbers," he explained to the meeting, "then we stopped for want of paper. But we had already aroused the farmers, and the general meeting removed the president and two members of the management."

Nine single sheets of crude newsprint stuck in successive weeks on a tree, protected from the rain

by an overhanging board, had deposed the management of a farm, shamed idlers, carried the sowing through to success, finished the hoeing and brought the brigade on record time to the haying season. The number of these collective farm wall-newspapers throughout the country is estimated by the *Peasants' Gazette* as half a million, with at least ten village correspondents for each. There are more than three thousand factory newspapers; these range from weeklies of a few hundred copies to dailies with a circulation of twenty thousand and more in the larger plants. These newspapers are both an organizing center for factory and farm life and a training school for young writers. With such a writing and reading public, it is not surprising that there are more than eleven thousand printed newspapers in the Soviet Union with a circulation of more than thirty-six million copies—thirteen times as great as before the Revolution.

An ever-growing stream of writers enters literature through the gateway of the factory and farm newspapers, which make modest but insistent demands on the humblest worker able to use a pen. Literary groups arise in centers like the Urals and the Donetz basin, or around some tractor station which serves the nearby villages. Many of the Donbas group of writers embarked on their literary careers when through with their day's work of

furnishing coal. Their magazine *Literary Donbas* has produced a noteworthy crop of stories and poems widely popular among miners.

The literary society of collective farmers at the machine tractor station in Voronovo village had as members two stablemen, a blacksmith, a reaper, a tractor-driver, a bookkeeper, a warehouseman, four day-nursery attendants, three teachers, two presidents of collective farms, one village president, three editors of field newspapers and sixteen farm women. In one year the members published through their own printshop two books of verses, the play *Miscalculated*, and a book of character sketches, *Bolsheviks of the Politodels.* They announced for the following year a play, *According to Merit*, a novel *Quiet Subversion*, *The Diary of a Tractor Driver*, and *The History of the Machine Tractor Station.*

It is difficult to conceive of the wide extent of amateur art activities of all kinds. Thousands of short-line popular stanzas known as *chastyshki* appear in the most distant parts of the Soviet Union celebrating the freedom of woman, the heroism of tractor-drivers, the growing prosperity of collective life. They vary in merit from mere doggerel giving rhymed technical guidance for reapers and cattle herders to verse of real beauty. The Donetz coal region alone reports more than eight hundred

brass bands, three hundred orchestras, two hundred and fifty choruses, thousands of dramatic circles and even forty-two ballet schools. Some of the Soviet dancers who attracted attention at a recent London dance festival came from these "self-expression groups." Amateur circles in drawing and painting also exist all over the country, and give local exhibitions which often unearth talent.

A constant interchange of ideas and personnel goes on between professional and non-professional groups. The Soviet press takes active part in establishing these connections. The newspaper *Culture and Sport* publishes reproductions of the best art from famous galleries. It encourages would-be artists to correspond and send in their work to be judged by well-known artists; those who show talent are sent to art schools. The magazine *Collective Farm Theater* every month issues eight or ten special supplements containing plans of caravan theaters, rural pageants and festivals, choral programs, texts of one-act plays. It connects the self-expression groups with the nearest professional theater which can help them in their technique. There are today one hundred rural theaters of professional standing.

One among many movements which swept the farms in the summer of 1935 was a campaign to discover musical talent among children. Hundreds of

local musical festivals were held to many of which professors from the Moscow Conservatory came by airplane to act as judges. As a result, 715 of the most talented children are being sent to special musical schools; the twenty-five best ones were brought to a specially created branch in the Moscow Conservatory of Music.

Not only in music but in poetry, drama and dancing, nation-wide "Olympiads" were held in the summer of 1935. In Leningrad, for instance, juries of artists visited the factories to select eleven hundred contestants for the district Olympiad from fifteen thousand amateur musicians, singers, dancers, acrobats, orators, accordion players and even jugglers. On a collective farm in Smolensk, an illiterate peasant woman of sixty-four years wrote a play, dictating it to a younger woman; the young folks of the farm produced it at the Olympiad in Smolensk. Besides the Olympiads, many "culture expeditions" of both scholars and composers penetrate the wilderness where live Khirgiz, Buryat-Mongols, Tajiks, Uzbeks, to seek and preserve the music and poems which shed light on early culture. A symphony orchestra recently organized made its first tour, playing old Cossack melodies in modern style, across what not so long ago was the steppe of half-savage nomads. Collective farms sent delega-

tions hundreds of miles to insist that the orchestra visit them.

Out of this artistic ferment in the lives of millions, arises the vigor of Soviet art, which feels itself called upon to find adequate expression for the awakening genius of the people. Soviet writers today, if they would be popular, must not confine themselves to delving in the depths of a single human soul; they must depict the vast variety of changing social relations. They spend much time in deepening their contacts with intimate details of factory or of farm; Sholokhov, for instance, makes his permanent residence in the village whose changing life is the subject of a whole series of novels.

Nor is the artist's human material passive; the human material talks back. The Vakhtangov Theater invites the audience to discuss plays between the scenes and at the end with the actors; witty and fruitful discussions occur. Meetings between writers and readers have become a popular feature of factory life. Authors like Sholokhov and Tretyakov have long adopted the custom of reading drafts of semi-finished manuscripts to audiences of workers and farmers. Frequently a worker is able to give sound advice on the handling of an industrial character. "Our reader, while a friend, is also a very severe critic," says the Soviet

writer, Vsevolod-Ivanov. "Intercourse with him is the best and most precious school."

Soviet readers demand simplicity and vividness of writing. They are not interested in complex analysis of burdened souls. Their whole life faces outward. Their interest is in people who do things, who change the relations of society. In the first decade after the Revolution, a typical theme in literature and drama was the hero who died in the moment of victory while the collective achievement marched on. The hero might be a Chapayev shot down before his victorious comrades appear on the scene, or a village organizer killed by a kulak and drawn to his grave in triumphal procession by the newly-arrived tractor which his labor had secured. The victory was collective, attained through the sacrifice of the heroic individual. This was the natural expression of the period of revolution and civil war.

New themes begin to dominate Soviet literature and drama of recent years. The hero no longer dies; he struggles, achieves, learns, and is himself made over, not by introspection but by the clash of action. He is the optimist-builder type creating a glorious and happy future. What the people demand of writers, they demand also of the graphic arts: an art that is inspired by and in turn inspires the great moods of the day. The workers of

Stalingrad sent a famous open letter to the artists: "Don't give us colored photographs, we are tired of them. We expect from you an art that is stirring and inspiring."

If the responsive demand of a great new public is a constant stimulus to Soviet artists, a second stimulus is found in co-operation with members of their craft. Writers, actors, painters—all have their organizations. They maintain club houses for social contacts, discussions and exhibitions; they have country retreats to which members withdraw for rest and creative work. They assist beginners with loans and subsidies; they foster high standards; they assist members in the sale of their work. The writers' organization issues literary journals, organizes courses, consultations and criticisms for new writers and runs a literary university for workers. The actors' club holds special midnight performances where its members meet famous visiting artists and see the season's best in music, dance and drama.

Four thousand artists belong to a co-operative which not only handles exhibitions all over the country, but also owns numerous factories producing artists' supplies, workshops for stone-cutting, metal-casting and frame-making and studios for lithography and engraving. This co-operative has a yearly turnover of forty-two million rubles. It

accepts on behalf of its members orders from city soviets, large industries, and workers' clubs which wish decorations and paintings; some of these orders run over the million-ruble mark. When the ten-year reconstruction plan of Moscow creates a demand for architecture, sculpture, landscaping and monumental art, the artists' organizations arrange discussions and excursions of sculptors and architects and initiate experimental fresco work on a large scale. Instead of being an isolated craftsman, the Soviet artist is part of a rich and influential organization which connects him with the government planning departments and the organized life of the country.

From this close association of artists with their fellow craftsmen and with their public has arisen a method of collective production which is becoming increasingly popular; it extends to the collective writing of books by a score of writers and even by whole factories. Thirty professional writers combined to produce *Belomor*, the famous tale of the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal. "We tried to tell how a canal was built in a far, cold and rocky place and how the chekists made new men out of prisoners," said Vsevolod-Ivanov. "We were authors entirely different in taste and in age, but we all tried to make that book united, wide-horizoned and mighty. That book is dear to me

even today. In writing it, I learned that we writers are really not such individualists as we like to call ourselves." *The Events of the High Mountain*, which told the history of an iron mine in the Urals, was written by more than one hundred miners. The miners consulted, wrote and improved it in common, as together they created and improved their mine. The book is a great political and artistic document, energetic, fresh and vital.

The History of the Civil War, the *History of Factories* and the now projected *History of the Russian Village* contain whole series of books, each of which compiles the experiences of hundreds or even thousands of people. The characters are not described by others; they describe themselves, each seeking in consultation with the others a significant artistic form. The meeting of two hundred village correspondents which I attended, decided to issue a book giving artistic form to the history of the township. They selected the best writers from each of twenty-five villages to work with two professional authors who had come from Moscow. Each local writer chose with the help of his village some vivid and significant episode or character whose story illumined the changes made by the Revolution. One contrasted the intimate family relations in his father's household with those in his own Soviet home. Another described the people

who had successively looked out of the windows of a certain ancient building—once a school for the daughters of the nobility and now the central club of the collective farm. The result was a book which was lacking in style and finish but vivid and unforgettable with actual life. It was not yet art, but it made part of the rich soil out of which great art may well grow in the next few decades.

Great art movements in the past have followed periods of economic expansion which gave stimulus to new creative life. "We are already in the great epoch; artistic values of permanent worth are already appearing but not yet the great masterpieces. Where else in the world are there even high artistic values?" said a Soviet writer to me. In literature Ostrovski's *How Steel is Welded*, Sholokhov's *Quiet Don;* in motion pictures, *Potemkin*, *Chapayev*, the *Youth of Maxim*, are among the many lasting contributions which the Soviets have already made to art. The Moscow subway is one of the first significant expressions of the epoch in architecture. As forums and temples expressed the spirit of ancient Rome, cathedrals and castles the Middle Ages, and skyscrapers the power of centralized finance, so this beautiful subway expresses the rhythm of millions of workers in efficient motion. The Lenin library in Moscow and the House of State Industry in Kharkov, and

some of the new factories, children's centers, and sanitoriums, also foreshadow the new architecture.

Are Soviet artists "in uniform?" Only in so far as they lack intelligence to respond to their social environment and the will to fight their way through to expression. Artists whose souls were formed by an old world felt the coming of the new as a thwarting of impulses. They had to find their way about among new publishers and new officials, who were trying more or less intelligently to protect the new order. Often groups of rising artists hogged the Revolution and organized to lord it over their fellows. Thus the RAPP (Association of Revolutionary Writers) succeeded in imposing its narrow standards for a considerable period, till other authors learned the new environment and smashed the RAPP. The social environment also changes; when that excellent play, *Days of the Turbines,* featured a tsarist officer as hero before post-war audiences where budding capitalists cheered him, Young Communist organizations fresh from fighting those officers protested wrathfully and had the play suppressed. When Nepmen followed the civil war into the past, the play revived to more tolerant audiences.

All authors everywhere adjust themselves to editors, publishers and readers; these are necessary media no less than words or paint. Not even in

America could "proletarian authors" come into being, until there were new readers who pushed them up. Soviet society also presses in various ways on artists. We authors deal with publishers who are worried by their paper quota; their criterion is "importance" rather than profit, since any half-good book is sure to sell. They rely in part on "political editors," officials of the Commissariat of Education, whose function is to give advice on the demands of the educational field and the political significance of the work. My own conversations with these political editors—they dislike the name censors—are singularly like those with publishers' readers in America. They make suggestions, some extremely valuable, some moderately useful and some of which I protest; they themselves yield to reason and prefer authors who know what they do. Only crude authors take them as enemies; through mutual discussion the product is improved. If differences lie too deep, one seeks another publisher; in the Soviet Union there is also the wider appeal. No one autocrat censors everything. Political editors more and more become highly educated specialists. Important plays are usually previewed by selected audiences of leading critics and persons familiar with their theme, both children and educators previewing a drama or motion picture destined for children. Only on

military matters and material likely to injure the Soviets' international relations is the censor absolute; [1] and these matters are hardly the realm of art.

If art survived the censoring by the whims of princelings in the feudal ages, and by the profit-motives of American publishers, why should it not survive the decisions of educational authorities and experienced critics who estimate its importance for a socialist society? To the artist now growing up in a Soviet environment, art is the natural expression of the collective life of millions given significant form by his own special talent or genius. Such an artist feels no repression in this new environment; he feels its great creative urge. Millions of rural journalists, thousands of dramatic clubs, tens of thousands of farm and factory orchestras furnish an alert and appreciative public. The leisure made possible by the social ownership of great modern machines is already widely used in the Soviet Union for pursuits of science and art. The barriers thus begin to wear thin between manual and mental labor; the same person does both. Genius, wherever it arises, finds ready access to

[1] The most striking recent example was the suppression of information during the difficult year of 1932, a suppression which turned several American journalists permanently against the Soviets. The Soviets believed with some reason that detailed knowledge of their difficulties would provoke the threatened Japanese invasion.

widening expression. From such a soil, watered by the artistic strivings of millions, great art must grow. More than great art—a people to whom art becomes man's natural self-expression, which no longer flames and dies.

CHAPTER XIV

REMAKING HUMAN BEINGS

When the All-Union Song and Dance Olympiad was held in the summer of 1935 in Moscow, the first prize for dance groups was won by a troupe who would be classed in the capitalist world as convicts. They were sentenced criminals who were still living in Labor Commune Number Two, to which they had been sent for reformation. Their performance of an Ukrainian folk-dance "The Snowstorm" took first place against fifty thousand entrants. To anyone unfamiliar with the Soviet technique for handling criminals, the dancing of the group was less amazing than their free association with other groups of artists in all the local and provincial dance festivals, which brought them at last to Moscow.

The remaking of criminals is only one specialized form of the process of remaking human beings which goes on consciously today in the Soviet Union. Unlike those who justify ancient abuses with the formula, "You can't change human nature," the Marxist knows that human nature is constantly changing. The serf of the Middle Ages

was a different human being from the highly skilled industrial worker of today, not only in methods of work but in mental outlook, nervous reactions, and even physical motions. Today a remaking of people in greater or less degree takes place across the entire Soviet Union. Illiterate, slow-moving peasants become attuned to rapid work in a collective labor process. Scientists, artists, engineers, doctors, once accustomed to depend upon capitalists for their living, adjust themselves to the new controls of a socialist state as employer. Some welcome the change, others resent it, but in all men the habits derived from the past are at war with the demands imposed by the present, and this struggle changes both the human beings and their environment.

To some the process of change is only half conscious, and therefore bewildering and painful. To the happiest it is a consciously welcomed process. For men in all ages have desired to change, to become in some direction "better." Moral teachers have urged them to effect this by an emotional decision to be good, honest, industrious. But this is a struggle in the dark with forces which the human being does not understand. His emotional conversion lasts as long as he can focus will and attention. But if the old environment continues, the old habits reassert themselves.

To a limited extent a human being may change himself under any social system, not by efforts of will but by calmly analyzing himself and his environment and placing himself under the impact of other forces which will change him. So much free will man has. But these individual efforts are limited by the social possibilities. Can a prostitute change her environment so that street-walking will become unnecessary? Only if an honest job is somewhere accessible. Can gangsters reform? Only if honesty is really the best policy; for him who would prosper under capitalism there is a time to be honest and a time to steal, and the criminal is the unlucky or stupid person who stole at the wrong time and in the unaccepted manner. Only a social system which insures to ordinary honest labor greater rewards than can be obtained by even the luckiest dishonesty will produce instinctively honest men.

A remarkable tale of the change in social standards is written by a newspaper correspondent from the Ural gold fields. Formerly, according to the writer, everybody admired clever miners who were able to steal nuggets which legally belonged to the private owners of the fields. This attitude persisted long after the mines were owned by the government. But recently at a party given to celebrate a betrothal, the young man in the heat of dancing

pulled out his handkerchief and with it a gold nugget which fell to the floor. There was a sudden silence and the party broke up without comment, even the girl turning away from the man thus revealed. "Everyone knew him for an enemy," wrote the correspondent.

The sharpest test of the conscious remaking of human character is found in the Soviet policy for handling law-breakers. The Soviet criminologist holds neither of the theories on which the prevalent systems of prison régime in capitalist countries are based. He does not believe in the existence of "born criminals" whose will must be broken by brutal suppression nor does he rely on emotional appeals to the "better nature" of the criminal, for he knows that this better nature exists as yet only in rudimentary form. "We don't assume that a man of anti-social habits will be at once reclaimed by gifts of chocolate, nice bathrooms, and soft words," a leading Soviet penologist told me. "Men are made over by a new social environment and especially by their work done collectively."

Soviet law aims to make over social misfits while protecting society from their attacks. Punishment as vengeance has no place in such an aim: revenge merely incites revenge in return. To make prisoners sit in solitude and think of their sins produces a fixation on crime. To "break a man's will" or

lessen his human dignity in any way injures him as material for a creative socialist society. Soviet justice therefore aims to give the criminal a new environment in which he will begin to act in a normal way as a responsible Soviet citizen. The less confinement the better; the less he feels himself in prison the better. Soviet justice began to fight crime under the harsh conditions of civil war, replying with ruthless measures to counter-revolutionary plots. "We have a double approach," said Attorney-General Vishinsky in an interview. "Active, confirmed enemies of our Soviet power who stick at nothing to injure us must be ruthlessly crushed. But even among these alien elements, among nobles, landlords, tsarist officers, capitalists, whom we had robbed of their private property, we had to be able even there to find those individuals who could be made over into useful workers. We cannot begin with clean hands and fresh bricks to build socialism; we must use even old bricks for the new building. But if we had tried to apply the idea of absolute humanitarianism to bitter enemies we wouldn't be here today."

Many social offenses are handled without bringing them into ordinary courts at all. A whole series of "comradely courts," in factories, schools and apartment houses, try informally people who

disturb their neighbors. These courts have the right to fix small fines for the benefit of the local club or library; they refer cases which they cannot handle to the public courts. There are even "children's courts" in which children judge each other in the presence of interested adults. One such children's court in an apartment house tried a boy for cruelty in killing a cat, and came finally to the conclusion that the real culprit was the superintendent of the apartment house who persistently failed to provide a place to play. The superintendent, who was present, accepted the decision, and organized with the children a committee to make good the shortcoming.

"Not only in the court but out of the court my job is social protection," a rural judge told me. "I must prevent court cases when I can." He told how he had prevented crime at a recent saints' festival. "Men always drink hard on such occasions; they fight and knife each other. So I called together the presidents of collective farms and the Party members, and we went through the crowd before drinking began and took away the knives and canes. They got drunk later, but nobody was badly hurt."

I sat in the court session which this judge held under the village trees and heard a dozen cases—stealing hay, bootlegging and the like—disposed of

in an afternoon. The commonest sentence was "compulsory labor" which did not remove the offender from his home but required him to do without pay some socially useful work, such as road-building, school-construction or even office work in the village soviet. Only one serious case appeared: more than half the calves in a collective dairy had died under circumstances which seemed to implicate the dairy manager of something worse than the criminal negligence charge which had been brought. The judge found that he was "guilty of negligence at least," but held the case over for further investigation to see whether he was guilty of "something more," i.e., intentional conspiracy to smash the farm. In that case he would be "sent away" from the village to a labor camp for a period of perhaps three years.

The labor camp is the prevalent method for handling serious offenders of all kinds, whether criminal or political. Most of the old prisons have been abolished; I have found them in rural districts converted into schools. The labor camps have won high reputation throughout the Soviet Union as places where tens of thousands of men have been reclaimed. They have, however, been the center of some of the most spectacular attacks on the Soviet Union in recent years. Allegations of brutal treatment and even of torture have found their

way widely into the foreign press. While it is clearly impossible to check every one of these accusations, they are contradicted by every competent observer who has ever seen the camps. Dr. Mary Stevens Callcott, the American penologist who has studied prisons all over the world, and who has had the unique experience of visiting the larger part of the Soviet camps, including those for the worst—and for political—offenders, has commented both in her book *Soviet Justice* and in conversations with me personally, on the "amazingly normal" life that differentiates these camps from prisons in any other part of the world.

She notes the freedom of movement over large areas of territory, the very small amount of guarding, the work done under normal conditions—seven hours for ordinary labor to ten for men whose tasks, such as driving a truck, permitted frequent rests during work. She could find no speed-up; laws of labor protection operated as in factories. Wages were the same as those outside, with deductions for living expenses; all above this could be sent by the prisoner to his family, saved or spent as he chose. "No uniforms with their psychological implications, no physical abuse; isolation only in extreme instances. Privileges and special rewards replace the system of special penalties." Among these special rewards are the two weeks'

vacation in which the prisoner may leave the camp, and the opportunities given for his family not only to visit him but even to live with him for extended periods. Normal human association goes on; men and women meet and may even marry while serving sentence, in which case they are given separate quarters.

What most impressed Dr. Callcott, however, was the type of men in charge of these camps, and the relation they had to the prisoners. She tells of going through the Moscow-Volga Canal camp with its director. Prisoners hailed him with obvious pleasure and informality. A girl rushed up to detain him by seizing the belt of his uniform lest he get away before she could tell him something. A teacher whose term was about to expire expressed a wish to stay on and work under him. There were only five officials in the central administration office of this camp of many thousand prisoners; all the work, including most of the guarding, was done by the convicted men themselves. "In fact," said Dr. Callcott, "I could never see what kept men in this camp unless they wanted to stay there. No convicts I have known would have any difficulty if they wanted to break away."

Both prisoners and officials, of whom Dr. Callcott asked this question—she talked with prisoners freely without the presence of officials—replied

that they didn't run away because if they did, "nobody in my working gang would speak to me when I came back. They would say I had disgraced them." There are, however, a certain number of incorrigibles who run away repeatedly, and these are given somewhat closer guarding for a time. Political prisoners, she noted, were treated like everyone else, except that those who had been persistent and dangerous in their attacks on the government were sent further away from the possibility of connection with their past associates. In all her conversations with these "politicals," she was unable to find one who had been sentenced merely for expressing anti-Soviet views. All were charged with definite action against the government.

"I did everything I could to destroy this government," one such man frankly told her, "sabotage of the most serious kind. But the way they have treated me here has convinced me that they are right."

Another prisoner, who had been in Sing Sing, San Quentin, as well as in jails of England, Spain and Germany, before he was picked up by the Soviets for grand larceny, had been reclaimed by the Baltic-White Sea Canal. He had done a bit of engineering in his youth, and was promptly given a chance to work at this specialty. He won a medal, pursued his studies further, and was doing

brilliant work on the Moscow-Volga Canal when Dr. Callcott met him. To her query about his reformation he replied:

"In the other countries they treated me like a prisoner, clapped me in jail and taught me my place. Here they clapped me on the back and said 'What can we do to make you into a useful citizen?' " Dr. Callcott conversed with many men now high in Soviet industry who had previously been reclaimed by the labor camps. Nothing in their attitude or that of those about them showed any stigma remaining from their prison life. "Of course, when it's over, it's forgotten," one of them said to her. "That," says Dr. Callcott, "is real restoration."

Information from many other sources and from my own observation corroborates Dr. Callcott. In August 1935 I visited the town of Bear Mountain, center of the administration of the Baltic-White Sea Canal, which is widely known in the USSR not only as a great construction job but as the place where tens of thousands of men won new lives for old. It is still the distributing center for the labor camps of this district.

The chauffeur who drove me over twenty miles of wilderness without a guard in sight was one of the prisoners. He talked quite freely and said that he didn't like the north but at least he had a chance

to study a trade or become an engineer. A dozen types of industry had been established to utilize and train all kinds of workers. They took pride in their modern equipment and the high quality of goods produced. In the holiday celebration going on in the public square during my visit, one could not always tell who were prisoners, who were free workers and who were "guards." The atmosphere was that of any new construction job in the country. Such, indeed, was the intention—to establish the atmosphere of normal constructive life, with certain old associations shut out.

What most interested me was the splendid theater, whose director boasted of his production of the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the *Red Poppy* ballet, and many of the latest Moscow plays. We learned later that he was a well-known Moscow producer, sent north for a serious crime. The camp authorities at once decided to build a theater, in order to utilize his abilities to the full. The theater cast itself consisted of lawbreakers, government officials, free workers and the families of all of them, mixing in the democratic intimacy of a dramatic performance. One wonders which of all his achievements this director will most boast of in old age, his work in Moscow or the northern theater created in Bear Mountain.

Many former prisoners from the Baltic-White

Sea Canal, after receiving freedom together with special prizes and high honors for their good work, went of free choice to help build the Moscow-Volga Canal, another convict-labor job. Here they were especially valued because through their own experience they understood the process through which new prisoners had to go and were especially skilled in helping them make themselves over. As in other Soviet construction camps, the workers on this canal had their art studio under professional direction, their musical circle and literary magazine, and their bureau of inventions through which four thousand proposals to improve the work of the canal have been offered by the prisoners themselves. Several prisoners, given their freedom because of inventions, refused to leave until the canal should be finished.

So well known and effective is the Soviet method of remaking human beings that criminals occasionally now apply to be admitted. I met one such man in Gulin village. Notorious locally as thief and drunkard, he had a dozen convictions to his discredit, till at last he went to the authorities saying: "I'm a man destroyed, but I want to be made over." They sent him to a labor camp whence he returned a qualified worker. Bolshevo Commune, the most famous "cure" for criminals, can be entered only by application approved by

the general meeting of members. Its waiting list is so long that it accepts only the most hardened cases, priding itself on being able to make over persons who cannot become cured in any other institution. Its strength lies in its large membership of intelligent former criminals, who apply to new entrants their intimate knowledge of the criminal mind.

Crime today is rapidly diminishing in the Soviet Union. From 1929 to 1934 sentences for murder decreased by one-half while sex crimes fell off to one-fourth. The cause is found in the growing strength of the Soviet environment to remake human beings; the penal policy is only a supplementary force. A striking example of the play of both causes may be found in the figures of prostitution. Pre-war Moscow had 25,000 to 30,000 prostitutes; these sank by 1928 to about 3,000,[1] a diminution clearly due to economic causes. In 1931, after the Five-Year Plan had abolished unemployment, the number sank still further to about eight hundred. To reclaim the more habituated, prophylactoria were established. These rose to the number of thirty-four in the whole USSR in 1934, and then swiftly declined to nineteen as their work was done. They are still declining for want of

[1] Material from Dr. V. Bronner, head of Institute of Venereal Diseases, Commissariat of Health.

inmates; only one of the original five is left in Moscow. No woman was ever compelled to go to a prophylactorium; the chief punishment for breaking rules was to be put out. Nine-tenths of those who entered left cured both of physical disease and of old habits and were accepted without comment into the normal working life of the city.

An eventual disappearance of crime is expected by Soviet authorities as the mental habits produced by a socialist system become established in Soviet life. For crime, in the Marxian view, arises from the conflicts of a class-exploiting society and will follow classes and exploitation into oblivion. In the first years of the new system, the sharp conflict with classes from whom it took privileges led to a decided increase both in crimes and in the repressive measures used by the state. Kulaks committed arson, cattle-killing, murder, and were exiled in large numbers; anti-Soviet engineers and officials sabotaged and were sent to labor camps. Today the kulaks have been amnestied, not only because many of them have recovered their civil status by honest labor, but also because the collective farms in the villages are strong enough to withstand their attack and absorb them. The labor camps which supplanted prisons are themselves diminishing, partly because they have "cured" their inmates, and still more because the normal free life

of Soviet society is becoming strong and prosperous enough to have a direct regenerative influence on those social misfits that remain.

In unforgettably lyric language the Soviet writer Avdeyenko, who a few years ago was by his own confession a "two-legged beast of prey," told the Congress of Soviets, to which in 1934 he was a delegate, the story of the degrading of a youth into a criminal and the subsequent remaking of the criminal into an honorable and famous man. "In 1926," he said, "under one of the cars of the Moscow-Tashkent express, lay two little passengers, myself and my comrade, voyagers making our way closer to the sun, searching for good people who would not be offended when we robbed them." He tells how the conductor threw them out on the damp earth, how they wandered in rain and sleet, seeking warmth and light, thrown out everywhere till exhaustion turned to anger, anger to despair, despair to a great hatred for mankind. In this hatred they fired a haystack set against a house. "A warm, calm feeling filled my heart. Tears of joy and vengeance came into our eyes. We embraced, laughing and crying, and spent the rest of the night in a public toilet, pressing against the warm wall to warm first our backs and then our chests till we fell asleep standing.

"I was destined to live many years—one-fifth of

my life—with the feelings of hatred, malice, revenge that were born in me at that station. After that I robbed and threatened without remorse." He tells how he stole fur coats and jars of butter, robbed drunkards in dark alleys, hooked vagrants off freight cars to steal their clothing, till he gradually became "a human beast, that most fearful two-legged blood-thirsty species without love or goodness or feeling or pity. Today it is frightful for me even to remember such a person.

"Today in this historic hall, I stand on the tribune, a member of government. I am a citizen with full rights. I am strong. I cherish the best human feelings: love, devotion, honesty, self-sacrifice, heroism. I write books. I dream of creating an unforgettable production. I love a girl unselfishly. I am continuing my race—it will be a happy one.

"I am happy, full of the joy of life, unshakably exuberant. I go to sleep with regret, I awake with joy. I shall live a hundred years. I can fly to the moon, go to the Arctic, make a new discovery, for my creative energy is not trod on by anyone.

"Today I recall my past for the last time. In filling out my application blank, under 'places of work,' I wrote: 'Till 1931 socially harmful activity. I begin the story of life from 1931.' And

they answered: 'So be it.' So you see I am four years old, the youngest here."

Avdeyenko gives the stories of other former law-breakers who have been made over. He traces the source of their anti-social past to the heritage of capitalist exploitation; he finds the force that redeemed them in the new socialist industries and the life that arises around them. "All of you know the institutions where such people are re-educated. But our whole Soviet system is one big workshop for re-educating men. I know people of two generations whose lives were no better than mine. We are engineers, writers, aviators, journalists, machinists, administrators of cities, scientists, Arctic explorers. The industries of our country remade us, and the industries were established by the Stalinist policy of industrializing the country. Comrade Molotov spoke of the newly created factories, cities and whole industrial regions, but he did not refer to the giving of life, human life, to the two-legged beasts of prey I have described."

CHAPTER XV

YOUTH SET FREE

"The generation which is now fifteen years old will see Communism and will itself build it."

LENIN.

"Life is good and to live is good—in such a land, in such an epoch! . . . We, young owners of our country, called upon to conquer space and time. . . ."

In June of 1935 these words of Anna Mlynek, young valedictorian of the first Moscow class to complete the new ten-year school, awakened in thousands of hearts the world over a realization of what youth's outlook might be in a socialist land. To youth in capitalist countries the outlook is gloomy. They look outward and see unemployment; they look inward and find confusion. They are developing, rational beings propelled into a world whose irrationality even their parents and teachers cannot explain to them. Those who love them best offer only a host of illusions; they are taught to look at the past and go backing into the future. So there goes on within them what the well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Frankwood Williams, calls a "mighty struggle in the dark . . .

with all the emotional complexities and uncertainties that home, school, community have woven into their being."

Soviet youth have not escaped struggle. Their birth was in the flames of civil war. Their childhood endured the famine years. Their adolescence was strained by great tasks of constructing a country. Many young lives were cut short or crippled in heart or lung or nerve in those years of battle and building. Even today they see across the future the dark threat of world war which may be launched at any time by the capitalist chaos beyond their borders, and in which they know that many of them must perish.

What then is the source of the explosive joy which becomes increasingly plain in the words, the sports, the celebrations of Soviet youth? It lies in those words "young owners." Men in the past have been subjects of kings or even proud citizens of democracies. Never till socialism dared they call themselves owners of the land in which they live. Ownership brings freedom in planning, clearness of goal, harmony of intellect and will in expanding life. Joint ownership brings comradeship reinforcing freedom, and a new, widened will to conquer space and time.

A letter sent by thirty-one young men and girls from a collective farm to Moscow to greet the as-

sembling of congress in early 1935 expresses it: "We go a road that is rich with life. We know our goal. What we are doing we do with clear consciousness. We know that what we do is important, necessary, great and glorious. We know the aim of our collective farm tasks. We know what will be tomorrow for we ourselves create it. Today is good, tomorrow will be better, the day after tomorrow immeasurably better. We often think of the glorious future of our farm, our township, our dear district, all our beloved land. We think of the bright future of all mankind which will be freed by the world-wide proletarian revolution."

Not on any mystic faith do these thirty-one young people base their hope for the future, but on homely details of daily fact that seem at first sight quite inadequate to explain their joy. They relate the changing of poor soil to good soil. "Our village never knew wheat till the Bolsheviks pushed it to the north!" They tell the expansion of music, drama, sport and science built on the firm economic foundation of their increasing harvest. They see the clear connection between their farm's success and the success of their country, and base on this their expectation of international revolution. Their life is an integrated whole from the farm to

the world. They have grown up and been formed by a new social order.

What are the qualities demanded of joint owners, which the Soviet schools seek consciously to develop? Neither the combativeness nor the submission which are the contradictory demands of capitalism, but a high degree of initiative and scientific interest, a high development of individual variety combined with highly developed social instincts. The aim of the Soviet school is not to create standardized people, suited to the demands of some undefined future boss, but to help youth discover and develop its own desires and capacities. In a hundred ways the schools are constantly asking: What do you most like to do? In a hundred ways they help this developing choice relate itself to the equally developing choice of others.

An American teacher who has taught for years in Soviet schools tells me that the approach to the child is far more individual than in America. Persistent efforts are made to find the child's particular aptitudes and interests. In the elementary grades there are two types of teachers:—group teachers remain with one group of children for several years, visiting their homes, becoming thoroughly acquainted with them and relating them to the special teachers who develop special aptitudes. By the seventh grade, which is roughly equivalent to

second year of high school in America, psychological tests help the child decide what he can do best; they tell him his capacities but impose no compulsion on his choice.

Summer camps and excursions are also planned to help children discover their special interests and widen the field of their choice. The best camps, such as the famous Artek in the Crimea, maintain amateur work of a high order in geology, botany, care of animals, study of sea-life and construction of airplane and automobile models. Children spending their summer in such camps discover and develop hobbies which may, or may not, develop into their life's work. Newspaper discussions also draw out the self-expression of children; a special newspaper, the *Pioneer Pravda*, is written almost entirely by children.

Last summer I met twenty young "Arctic explorers" under sixteen years of age on the Murmansk train bound for Polar regions. Their energetic study of maps, Arctic cruises, Northern peoples had been sufficient to win from their teachers a recommendation which included them in an organized cruise of the north. They would meet adult Arctic explorers who would treat them smilingly but courteously as possible future colleagues. Ten of the best pupils in botany were similarly allowed to make an expedition at government ex-

pense to the Altai mountains, where they hiked two thousand kilometers and found twenty-seven new varieties of black currants and a type of onion which resists 45° of frost. Two of these young explorers went as delegates to deliver the plants to the aged plant-creator Michurin. When he asked: "Weren't you afraid to cross wild rivers and sleep at night in the woods?" they answered: "Sometimes we were afraid. We feared that our expedition would fail to find any new plants and we would disgrace ourselves as Michurin's grandchildren."

Such trips are the reward of marked aptitude, but all children take some part in the "grown-up" activities of the country. In Molvitino township the farm children told me proudly of scores of tons of bird droppings and wood ashes collected to fertilize the exhausted fields. In the 1934 "war with drought," when a chief harvest problem in the south was the low, dry stand of easily broken grain, children's groups of gleaners followed the reapers and competed to save great piles of grain heads. Every Soviet child knows the heroism of Mitia who caught three harvest thieves red-handed. In Artek Camp I met a child who had prevented a train wreck by reporting a loose rail and another who saved an aviator by lighting a bonfire at night to guide the errant plane: these children won wide

renown among other children and were rewarded by a summer at Artek. Children of railway workers in Tiflis built and operate a half-mile railroad in the Park of Culture and Rest; it is a serious enterprise which carries passengers, takes in a thousand rubles each holiday and spends the money in proper Soviet style to "expand the road."

These out-of-school activities of children became at one time so absorbing that they threatened health and education. Young Pioneers "saved the harvest," reclaimed drunken parents, denounced village grafters and debated whether their first duty was to the school or to "help the country." Today children are reminded that "learn, learn, learn" is Lenin's statement of the three most necessary things for young humans to do. School dominates and organizes all other child activities. But it never excludes them. In all their learning many forms of activity have part.

The early discipline of children is largely through mass pressure, highly effectively organized by the children themselves. Children often come to a teacher with suggestions about the best way to handle difficult cases. They inform the teacher of home conditions which have made certain children backward in study or in comradeliness. They organize committees to go with the teacher to the homes. Children will themselves expose violations

of child labor laws, or write to the papers about parents who beat other children. The highest honor given to able children is to be asked to help more backward ones with their studies in a spirit not of condescension but of good team-work, like that of a basket-ball player who helps his team excel. The strongest penalty in any school is given when children ask to have a child excluded on the ground that his conduct disturbs their work.

All these activities of children directly reflect and prepare for their coming adult life. The encouragement of individual variety harmonized by regard for the rights of others expands into the more definite yet wider interests of youth. By the end of the ten-year school, which is roughly equivalent to a combination of the American elementary grades and high school, the boy or girl usually has some interest which he wants to test in serious work. Some young folks go to work even earlier, spending part of the years between fourteen and eighteen in a factory trade school with part-time work. Some go direct from the secondary school to the university. But the commonly encouraged procedure is to finish ten years of school and then go to work in the late teens for a period of self-testing before deciding on specialization.

These are not odd jobs to earn one's way through college, such as are known in American life. They

are part of a youth's conscious self-education in the actual world of production. They are related to his already appearing interests, which they test and develop. I know a boy of nineteen who chose to work on a farm in the summer. Since he already knew that he wanted to become an entomologist, the farm was expected to give him scientific work. He sorted apples for diseases, staked cabbages to count the bugs in sample areas, and otherwise used his special interest for farm production, improving his scientific technique while he worked. If an emergency had occurred, he would have helped in other ways, but emergencies which waste the time of young people in blind alley tasks are a blot on the reputation of any Soviet industry. When four girls of my acquaintance went to work in a chemical laboratory in Siberia and found it so disorganized that there was nothing really useful to do, they protested to the Party against this waste of their time, and the organization which was employing and paying them was censured and ordered to release them for other work. The time of youth is a precious treasure of the community. The most accepted reason which any youth can give for leaving a job is that it offers nothing more for him to learn.

At no time in life is there any gap between work and schooling. Education is not a commodity pur-

chased by money and consumed in childhood or in four charmed years of isolated university life. It is a personal and public necessity, without limits, freely available from childhood to old age. Courses of general culture are not crammed into a special period; they are taken after work in any quantity desired. They are paid for by state or trade union; any group of workers anywhere may decide to study chemistry, music or parachute-jumping and call on their trade union to pay the teachers. When young people feel that they have chosen a permanent specialty, for which they need some years of concentrated study, they apply to enter a university or a research institute. For these institutions their ability and seriousness is tested by severe entrance examinations. If they pass, study becomes their regular work, paid for as such by the state. It is fully as strenuous as the factory; they spend six or seven hours a day in class rooms and laboratories in courses chosen on a broad basis, but all consciously directed towards preparation for their profession.

I visited the dormitory attached to three institutions of higher education in mining, metallurgy and non-ferrous metals. A pretty girl was specializing in blast furnaces, a former book-binder was studying mining engineering, a factory-worker was becoming a geologist for Central Asia, a broad-

faced yellow Kazak was preparing to work in copper in the newly opened mines of Kazakstan. All of them were paid for their study by the Commissariat of Heavy Industry. Their stipends ranged from one to two hundred rubles monthly, the higher pay rewarding the best students. Every summer they chose their "practice work" from a dozen localities which offered, and as soon as they found some place where they wished to sign up for a job after graduation, they got additional wages from their chosen industry. The majority decided by the third or fourth year of the five-year course. Thereafter they felt themselves bound to work, for at least a time after they finished the university, for the institution which had paid for their education. This was not felt by them as compulsion but as the intelligent specializing of their own choice on the basis of a wide range of opportunities. Any good reason, such as personal health or the demand of some national emergency, would be recognized by them and their fellows as grounds for release. But a frivolous change of occupation without reason would brand a youth as undependable, while to give up a job because conditions proved difficult would be stigmatized as cowardly. For what was he trained if not to make the conditions better? Has he not at his disposal for this all the resources of the land?

What jobs does youth choose? By no means the easy ones. When has youth, when free to choose, ever asked for the easy way? Youth wants conquest. Youth is explosive energy, so explosive that under capitalism it must be befogged with illusions, lest it wreck the world's ancient ways. Soviet youth is encouraged to make the world over; it responds to the call. In every difficult struggle faced by the Soviet state from its beginning, a mighty host of youth has volunteered.

Youth does not wait to be asked; it takes the initiative. Through its organization, the Young Communist League, it repeatedly demands the right to battle on each new important "front." I know young women who fought in the civil war, divorcing the husbands who would have prevented their going. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant, the first Soviet conveyor, was built and manned by young folks coming from every part of the country. "We give our youth to this struggle," they said to me six years ago. "We do not spend it in ease or amusement. We shall not stop till we have built the socialist city of Stalingrad." I have vivid memory of the boat that came at eleven o'clock one night for a long-expected boat-ride after a hot day and was turned down by young voices, without a word from their elders, as too late. "Got to

go home; got to be fresh for the line tomorrow," they said as they turned away.

Thus was launched in the far northeast of Asia the new ship-building port Comsomolsk on the shores of the Ohotsk Sea, a city proudly carved from mosquito-ridden forests by the forces of youth alone. Thus was built the Moscow subway in a titanic drive by youth to create "the most beautiful subway in the world." Moscow's Young Communists left office jobs, postponed university courses and requalified as underground ditch-diggers to build it. Every great construction job has its special tasks seized by youth; they take over the building of a blast furnace in competition with one raised alongside by their elders. They organize special farms which make proud records. They pour into the new industries, master the new technique, form the new staff of engineers.

Like young folks everywhere, Soviet youths have the problem of the relation between work and marriage. This is never a question of whether they can afford to get married; that is taken for granted. The problem is to find time for a satisfying family life. One troubled youth writes to the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in the discussion recently held on this question: "I am a turner. I am also a Young Communist. Besides that I am working on an invention. My days are so full that I don't have

time to breathe. I see my wife only at night and then I'm so dead tired that I fall down and sleep like a corpse. Lydia weeps. I am not a beast; I am sorry about Lydia. But I try to organize my time and I can't even find an hour for my class on planning, much less for my family."

This is an extreme case; it is balanced by young Kuznetsova who lays down her specifications for a husband: "I wouldn't have a man who was not a good social worker. But neither will I live with one who is interested only in his factory. I don't want a one-sided man. I want a husband who will play volley ball with me, do skiing, appreciate the theater, music, general culture, read a book with me and argue about it afterwards. All these things have place in a well-rounded life." These are the problems of a rich, abundant existence, which needs only to be organized. Soviet youth never feels that it must renounce anv of these satisfactions.

Each year when September First brings the International Youth celebration, hundreds of telegrams pour into the offices of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, organ of Communist Youth, announcing achievements of youth and the gifts which it offers the country. A group of young steel men wire that they have dismantled and reassembled an open hearth furnace in six days instead of the usual

ten; a group of young miners sends an extra train of coal manned by a train crew especially chosen from scores who competed for the honor. Other groups announce the organization of "cultured field camps" where music, drama and books enliven the evening's work on the farm. Still other groups blazon sport records on floats in the great demonstration which storms the Red Square. Young Communists of the Red Dawn Telephone Factory hiked to the Mongolian border, 5,400 miles in 180 days. Another group is back from climbing the Altai, covering 1,200 miles on foot. They celebrate the Baikal-Murmansk ski-run across half Asia and half northern Europe; they announce Alpine and parachute records made by youth. Nor is there any sharp line between records in sport and in steel-mills. All are one unified, advancing life.

Not in conflict with work but around it in the social life of the factory collective, Soviet youth develops activities of sport and recreation which make up a well-rounded life. Tsarist Russia possessed thirty thousand members of sport and athletic clubs; there are six million today. Tens of thousands of cheering spectators turn out to soccer matches between Moscow, Leningrad, Central Asia, Turkey and Spain. Soviet sportsmen begin to invade world records. But the characteristic of Soviet sport is not the straining for records in one

field at the expense of all round physical fitness; its symbol is the GTO badge—"Ready for Labor and Defense"—to receive which one must pass certain standards in walking, running, swimming, rowing, skiing, jumping and every kind of summer and winter sport. Two and a half million persons have qualified for this symbol, and a second degree of GTO is now established, requiring high diving, parachute jumping and other difficult tests.

Parachute jumping has become almost a national sport in the Soviet Union, typical of its sky-storming youth. Flying, gliding, jumping, youth fills the heavens above Tushino field several times each summer with its aviation festivals. One hundred and fifty at a time they leap from great carrier airplanes and come sailing down under canopies of many-colored silk—red, white, blue, orange, lilac—covering the sky with rainbow hues. Week after week they make new records, young men and girls in individual or group jumps. Nina Kameneva, descending from icy space nearly twice the height of Mount Blanc and breaking a world's record, made the remark which was seized by Soviet youth as a new slogan: "The sky of our country is the highest sky in the world."

CHAPTER XVI

NEW MEN EMERGE

The emergence of new people has been noted with growing frequency in recent years by the Soviet press. Editorial writers have tried to analyze their qualities; novelists have attempted to portray them. A Russian author suggested a year ago to the *Moscow News* a series of half-column novelettes, each containing the snapshot of a life. To the editor's query how many of these stories he had, he answered casually: "About a thousand."

"A thousand!" exclaimed our editor.

"That's not so many," replied the author, "to describe the great variety of people now appearing in our world."

Lincoln Steffens told me of meeting one of these new people, a Soviet youth in Hollywood, "so new that he could not understand these United States. . . . He was a unit; he thought and acted together. He was constantly puzzled by the tactics of American capitalists, considered from the standpoint of their own survival."

Increasingly I also meet new people in the Soviet Union. Not infrequently I have misunderstood

them; their approach to life was different from anything I had known. Their respect for my will, their unwillingness to use their personality to convince my intellect, I mistook for aloofness, so accustomed was I to the salesman's method of putting himself over. On another occasion, traveling on a Siberian train, I made the opposite mistake and took for promiscuous flirtation the expansive joy of a high official whose deft approaches to every person he met drew forth answering flashes of life. Then I saw him evade a kiss from "Little Slant-Eyes," a Tartar girl with whom for two days he had been joking.

"Kissing is for the beloved one," he said, smiling. "But the joy of life is to be shared with everybody."

"Do you know what they have thought of you on this train?" I asked him then.

"What they think affects them, not me. They will also learn if it is in them."

Never had I seen a more poised personality. Later he remarked, "We Bolsheviks, as Kirov always said, must be the happiest people in the world. But I must be one of the happiest even among Bolsheviks. Our older men are marked by too many years of combat. Our younger men can hardly appreciate the grimness of what they have never known. But I spent my childhood in op-

pression and my youth fighting for freedom; I am old enough to know the conquered past, yet young enough for a whole new life."

Is it possible yet to say in what direction this new humanity is developing? Are there any characteristics common to these millions of people who are becoming subtly differentiated from the past? Many attempts are being made to analyze them. When the Turkoman horsemen descended on Moscow after their amazing 4,300 kilometer run across the deserts, Stalin said: "Only clearness of goal, perseverance in attaining the goal, and firmness of character breaking through every hindrance can achieve such a glorious victory." *Pravda* elaborated this theme into an editorial on the Soviet ideal of character, declaring it to be the exact opposite of that "unquestioning obedience" which Hitler had previously demanded in an impassioned speech to fascist youth.

"Strong and original individuality," was claimed by *Pravda* as the basic quality of a Soviet citizen. Not the "rugged individualism" which capitalism in its early stages glorifies for its upper classes, and which sinks into gangsterism in the fascist decline. Not conforming obedience responding under all conditions to "God and country," the capitalist ideal which under fascism becomes blinder submission for men whose destiny it is to be bossed. Not

that ability to look on both sides of the question which intellectuals under capitalism prize as a sign of high intelligence, but which *Pravda* disdains as "division of personality and double-mindedness, Hamletism in romantic colors."

"Not submission and blind faith does the Communist Party implant, but consciousness, daring, decision. It is just from the clear goal, seen by millions, from fighting perseverance and firmness that there grows that remarkable voluntary discipline which bourgeois society cannot even imagine. . . . Clearness of aim, perseverance and firmness won the victory in the civil war, restored our ruined economy and created socialist industry and collective farming. Clearness of aim, perseverance and firmness made way through the ice of the Arctic, lifted our heroes of the air into the stratosphere and brought close to the Communist Party many of the great representatives of science, literature and art. . . . The Communist Party draws out from all the toilers of our great fatherland the quality of strong individuality, inseparably connected with the strong collective of the toilers. . . ."

To many persons in capitalist countries these words will be only partly intelligible. They have been so accustomed to considering that their own life is "free" and Soviet life "regimented" that they

cannot at once grasp a viewpoint which holds the exact opposite. Yet even the casual observer of human beings today in the Soviet Union notices that while they have certain characteristics in common they are by no means regimented into uniformity, but show a vivid individuality at least as great as is found anywhere in the world. A business man in Chicago who had never seen Moscow but who was something of an art critic, told me that he was especially impressed in all Soviet photographs, whether of demonstrations in the Red Square or of athletes and factory workers, by the quality of will in the faces. "Utterly different from the sheepish or brutal faces of Nazi pictures," he added. It is clear to anyone who talks with Soviet workers or the more advanced of the collective farmers that they feel themselves possessed not only of freedom, but of a peculiar type of reinforced and collectively supported freedom which is strong enough to conquer all the obstacles in the world.

Freedom is never absolute; it is concrete and specific. It means different things to different classes and generations of men. The American pioneer faced the wilderness ax in hand with the mood of a free creator, saying: "What shall I build?" His freedom was conditioned by the loans he made or failed to make for his migration, by the

railroad that came or failed to come, and by the subtler limitations of his own skill and character, yet with ax in hand, he felt free. His ownership of his primitive means of production was the source and guarantee of his sense of freedom.

When the means of production became the factory, the meaning of freedom slowly changed. Freedom became to the owner the right to fix prices and wages, to the worker the right to drift from job to job, seeking an easier boss. Freedom in government became the "right to choose one's rulers," not the right to own and rule. Freedom of thought and speech became the right to complain, to voice transient shifts of opinion, not the right to drive one firm consistent thought into life. As capitalism advanced, men became diversified in their work and capacities, but standardized in their instinctive reference to a boss. Soviet workers notice this quality in Americans who come to their factories. "They know how to complain and make suggestions, but not how to desire and will."

"Desire and will" is the form which freedom takes when men are owners. When they are joint owners, a form of will develops—not unlike that in a family, a partnership or a committee—which determines itself by consultation. "He does not make individual decisions," is already a compliment in the Soviet Union; it is applied to Stalin. It is

as if one said of a scientist that he refuses to base conclusions on a single experiment. Men always have made up what they call their own minds through the influence of other minds as well; but now they grow conscious of these sources of their choice; they organize even these sources. They criticize, but from within, not from aloof isolation. Workers express discontent not by strikes against an alien owner, but by joint fights against bureaucracy to improve the organization of the land. Freedom becomes less a protest and more a steadily burning choice; not a flight, but a seeking. It is seen not as absence of restraint, but as conscious selection of one particular, individual place in a living complex mechanism whereby a thousand similar freedoms are welded into flame and power.

In the latter half of 1935 the Stakhanovites began to shake the country. People compared it to an explosion, an earthquake. The movement appeared simultaneously in a hundred places and a score of industries. Despite the great variety of its people, the fundamental characteristics were the same. Workmen operating new machines began to shatter past standards of production often against the indifference or opposition of engineers and managers but accompanied by the strained attention of their fellow workers. Each of them had to

fight his way against old concepts and habits; one or two of them were killed by angry workers, outraged by this sudden burst of speed. But overwhelming public opinion hailed and copied the innovators. Swiftly, in the midst of their local elation, they found themselves acclaimed across the land as heroes.

Within two months every country in the world was forced to take notice, disguising the information as best they could under the name "speed-up." For this was no mere routine news from Russia. This was a storming of the world frontiers of productivity and science. Miners in the Donbas were doubling Ruhr production. Blacksmiths in Gorky Auto Works broke standards set by Ford. Shoemakers in Leningrad made records 50 per cent higher than the world record held by the Bata factories of Czechoslovakia. Young girl weavers ran far ahead of America's best achievements. Swedish saw-mill machinery, standardized to cut ninety-six cubic meters of lumber, was impertinently pushed to nearly three hundred by woodsmen in Archangel.

Hundreds of American engineers and workers, who tried five years ago to "teach the Russians," and who today are scattered in jobs and out of jobs all over the world, must have grumbled glumly when they heard of it: "Why couldn't they do

it when we showed them how?" For the events which have happened are externally obvious. The Soviet Union equipped itself throughout with modern machinery and methods, and drew eleven million greenhorns into industry to operate them. The greenhorns broke machines, wasted material and learned. They could not learn at once when their teachers told them; it had to grow in their nervous systems. But what they have learned is not only the technical skill of America. It is all that skill with the pride of ownership added. Ownership of the whole great mechanized process that makes the modern world.

People who were allowed to attend the first All-Union Congress of Stakhanovites—and everyone in Moscow wanted to go—told of the indescribable enthusiasm, the irrepressible, thundering cheers. The Soviet press grew lyric over "taming the fiery steed of science," "washing out the barriers between manual and mental labor," "preparing the way from socialism to communism where each shall receive according to his needs." Stalin was saying to the assembled delegates: "We leaders of the government have learned much from you. Thanks, comrades, for the lesson, many thanks." Those men in the Congress believed—and the country believed with them—that the plan made by Marx was coming true. They had established

a new economic system. They had painfully equipped it with modern methods. They had slowly learned to manage it jointly, and now the predicted results appeared. Socialism was beating capitalist production, just as capitalism beat feudalism.

What are the characteristics of these Stakhanovites? A joyously dynamic initiative, a pride in mastery of complex technical processes, a conscious co-operation with society, a hunger to learn. Every phrase dropped in their discussions shows exultant power in creation and desire to share the new skill with others. Busygin, the blacksmith who made the crankshaft record in the forge of the Gorky Auto Works, declares, "There's nothing I dream of so much as studying. I want to be not only a smith but to know how hammers are made and to make them. . . ." Marie Demchenko who made the sugar-beet record asked as a reward a course at an agricultural college—and got it. Stakhanov himself went down in the mines to make his record as the chosen representative of his fellows. "International Youth Day was approaching and I wanted to mark the day with a record in productivity. For some time my comrades and I had been thinking how to break the shackles of the norm, give the miners free play, force the drills to work a full shift." When Slavnikova wanted to beat

the record on a machine she had carefully studied but never yet used, the foreman opposed her. "I'm a fearless parachute jumper; that norm doesn't scare me; I'll upset it," she replied. She drove the machine to a fivefold record. She relates the sequel: "At four in the afternoon we had a meeting and they gave us flowers for our good work."

Bobilev, the steel smelter, wants you to know that he is a scientist: "We are no sportsmen. We tested out our open hearth; we repaired her and asked how much she could give. She told us 11.33 tons." Vasiliev, the blacksmith who holds the record for forging connecting-rods, uses the words "boiled up" and "exploded" to describe his feelings about his forge. When his 1934 record was beaten by Andrianov, he "boiled up" and went back to the works with four days left of his vacation. "I beat Sam Andrianov but I saw in a newspaper that a Kharkov smith had made more than a thousand. Then I exploded! I made 945 in one shift. The smith Stadnik also exploded and made 975. I consulted my gang how to organize our work-place; we got 1,036. We talked it over with the foreman and told him how to change the furnace; with true Stakhanov zeal he gave us in four days a furnace that could heat 1,500 in a shift. What stops us now? We talked it over and placed the metal in such order that it would be easier to take up.

On October 27 I made an all-Union record 1,101 in a single shift. Comrades, I haven't yet got out of that hammer all she'll give, but I'm going to get it out to the very bottom."

Characteristic of the Stakhanovites is their disdain for overtime work as a confession of inefficiency; their insistence that a rhythm shall be found which shall not be physically exhausting—"if the work is done right you feel better and stronger"; and their zeal in teaching the new skill to their fellows. The locomotive engineer Omelianov, demands the "worst engineer" as a pupil, and makes him also a beater of records. Slavnikova is asked by an inefficient woman: "You're a Young Communist; why don't you teach me?" She gives time to instruct the older woman, who also begins to improve.

Life in the new factories is by no means ease and harmony. It is more like an explosion or a battle. An engineer of my acquaintance finds the Stakhanovites frankly terrifying. "They put up signals over their lathes when out of material. These signals pop up everywhere and I have to keep them satisfied, or they'll say I sabotage. You can lose your reputation. You can be cleaned out of the Party. I'm sitting up nights to plan the flow of work." The demands of these new men are breaking the old technical processes. For "every worker

knows," says the weaver Lisakova, "that overfulfillment of the norm will not only improve labor conditions in the factory, but also the kindergartens, nurseries, dining-rooms. All this depends on the efficiency of organization, the spirit of solidarity, the fulfillment of the plan."

It no longer even occurs to these joint owners that a rise in productivity might throw men out of work. Shifts of workers there will be from one job to another; but industry bears the expense of retraining workers. Conflicts there will be, harsh problems and many, but they feel quite sure that they can plan and achieve. They have won through civil war, pestilence, famine; they tightened their belts to build the first Five-Year Plan. They are driving rapidly through a second, which increases food, clothing, housing visibly each year. They haven't the faintest doubt that as owners of their country they will always have worthwhile things to do.

"Ten years hence," said a Stakhanovite to me, "farming and industry may cease to be our main occupations. But there are other occupations when once we produce all the goods we need. Human development, exploration, science—to these there are no limits!"

Whatever kind of world will be made by these new builders, one thing is certain: it will be built

on conscious planning and will. Not regimentation but choice will make it, a choice that develops its own social guidance. If more people want geology, there will be more geology; if more want medicine, there will be more medicine. More comforts or more leisure, more music or more exploration of the Arctic? Our new world will be what we choose to make it. And if excess of choice in one direction leaves any fields unfilled, the social ways of influencing choice are clear and conscious. A combination of material rewards with social recognition, is already the method of attracting volunteers. The announcement in January, 1933, that agriculture was the most important front, brought hosts of recruits from the ablest people of the country. Calls for help through the League of Communist Youth supplied the driving personnel for Stalingrad Tractor Plant and the Moscow subway. Increased wages and shortened hours have supplemented statements of public need to attract more people into fields as diverse as medicine and mining.

Are there any bounds whatever to man's advance? These new men recognize none. "If in so short a time and with so backward folk we owners of one-sixth of earth have done so much, what shall we men not do when we own the resources of our planet, unhindered by the fear of

wars? If the earth grows old, shall we not remake it to suit us? If the solar system runs down, shall we not find ways to give heat to our sun? Need we fix any limit to attainment, when the earth is our jointly owned workshop and home?"

Such is their confident philosophy. So they answer, when they take time to discuss at all. A new religion? No, that is a word disdained. A widening science, they would say. Their approach to ultimate reality is not one of faith and submission, on which all religions have been based. It is one of defiance and conquest through intellect and will. When the conflicts between slave and master, serf and baron, worker and capitalist are ended, and the classless society is attained, there begins the titanic conflict of conscious men with unconscious nature. Not by faith but by analysis, not by submission but by defiance shall we rise in that unending battle. Unending? Relatively only, not absolutely. But that end is beyond our present power even to imagine.

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